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Comparative Aesthetics in Contemporary China

ZHOU LAI XIANG

I

Chinese comparative aesthetics germinated in Qing Dynasty. By the end of this Dynasty, Zou Yi Gui (1688-1777), in his work *Xiao Shan's Book of Model Paintings* (about 1740) and Sun Nian (about 1840-1910) in his work *On Paintings in Yi Garden* (about 1897) compared the aesthetic thoughts of Chinese paintings with those of the Western paintings. Nian said: "Painting of the West strictly seeks life-likeness, and is not different from the image of life." But Chinese painting looks for frames of pen and ink. In painting there is not only the image of life but also reflection of spirit. Since the Enlightenment movement of modern China, critics like Liang Qi Chou (1873-1929), Wang Guo Wei (1877-1927) and Iu Xiun (1880-1936) consciously discovered the respective characters and generalities between Chinese and the Western aesthetic cultures. Liang Qi Chou compared Chinese classical literature with the European Romantic and Realist literature, and found some essential differences between them. Wang Guo Wei put an end to the classical aesthetics of China, and opened an avenue for the contemporary aesthetics of China. Through introducing the contemporary aesthetics of the Occident and innovating Classic aesthetics of China, he became a representative in the turning point of history of aesthetics. He absorbed foreign ideas to reconstruct original materials of China (see Zheng Yin Liuo, Prologue of Wang Guo Wei's Posthumous). Drawing upon Kant and Schopenhauer, he analyzed and studied arts of China, and wrote several important monographs about Chinese literature and aesthetics. For instance: "Criticism of a Dream in Red Mansion;" "Textual Criticism on Chinese Opera and Drama in Sung Yuan Dynasties;" "Textual Research about the Words of Chinese Music in Tang and Sung Dynasties" and Ren Jian's Notes on Ci (a Chinese poetic genre). The foregoing researchers used the comparative method to combine Chinese aesthetics with the Western, and had important historic meanings in the turning point of developing from classical aesthetics to the contemporary one. Since then Mr. Zuong Bei Hua (1897-1986), Professor Zhu Guang Qian (1897-1986), Professor Qian Zhuong Shu, Mr. Den Yi Zhe had done much more precise comparative researches on arts and aesthetics of the West and China.

Mr. Zong Bei Hua in his work *Strolling in Aesthetic Realm* compared poetry and painting of China and the West. He said, "Since the Egyptian, Greek and the Western

painting and sculpture represented reality life-like, they can be compared on the basis of their sculptural and architectural genesis. But on contrary, the Chinese art does not represent reality mechanically as it consists of formal beauty of rhythm in gestures and postures so that both the plastic and architectural arts are as creative as poetry." (Pp.100- 101) Professor Zhu Quang Qian had not only wide and deep knowledge of the traditional aesthetics of China, but also did special research on the Western aesthetics. He was the most important specialist who translated several aesthetic monographs of the West into Chinese. His translations include: Plato's *Dialogue of Literature and Art, Laocoon* by Lessing and *Aesthetics* by Hegel (three volumes). In his interpretive works, such as *Psychology of Literature and Art* and *Psychology of Tragedy*, Prof. Zhu introduced the psychological aesthetics of the modern West to China. Especially, we should mention here that in 1930 Prof. Zhu had translated (with an introduction) Benedetto Croce's *Principles of Aesthetics* into Chinese (Edited by Zhen Zhong in 1947).

His thoughts had been influenced greatly by Croce. In 1987, Prof. Zhu translated another Italian aesthetician Giambattista Vico's work *New Science* into Chinese (People's Literature Publishing House, 1987). But he introduced Vico to China much earlier than in 1987. In 1984, his book Vico's *New Science and its influence on Aesthetics of China and the West* was published by Hong Kong Chinese University. Professor Zhu was the first to introduce Italian aesthetics to China. Based on this translation, his monograph on poetry compared Chinese poetry with the Western tradition. His book *Psychology of Tragedy* compared the Western tragedy with the Chinese tragedy.

During the last two decades, the comparative aesthetics of China had a prospective development. After having researched on aesthetics of China and the West systematically, Professor Zhu Lai Xiang published his essay "Theoretic Comparison of Aesthetics in China and the West" in 1980. This essay had many important specialties. Because, before this essay, the comparative research in China was always piece-meal, and partial. But it was for the first time that Prof. Zhou's essay made a comprehensive comparison of the Chinese and the Western aesthetics. More important, before this essay, the comparative research paid attention to the differences only. But this essay pointed out the general laws that both sides had. Before this essay, some of the comparative researches regarded the West as better than China. Or conversely, some of the comparative researches affirmed China and denied the West. The aim of Prof. Zhou's essay was not to determine superiority or inferiority of the either side, but to demonstrate the respective laws and the mutual complementation of the respective laws. Prof. Zhou delivered his ideas to the Tenth Annual Meeting of the International Society for Aesthetics, and his essay was collected in the proceedings published in Canada.

Later, Prof. Jiang Kun Yiang of Fu Dan University presented his paper: "Some Comparative Studies of Aesthetic Thoughts of China and the West" (see *Learning Monthly*, Volume 3. 1982). The essay made the comparison among four aspects: social history, tradition

of thinking, practice of literature and art, and language. Prof. Jiang said, "the main trend of aesthetic thought in the West from beginning to end was of the theory of imitation. But the main aesthetic thought ancient China was prone to is the theory of expression." This opinion was similar to that of Prof. Zhou's.

Since then, Zhou Lai Xiang has been publishing a series of essays on different aspects of comparative aesthetics, such as: "Chinese Painting in Poetry and the Western Poetry in Painting," "Comparison of Aesthetic Ideals of Classic Harmony between China and the West," "Expressive Aesthetics that China was Prone to and Reproductive Aesthetics that the West was Prone to," "The Developing Tendency of Expressive Aesthetics of China and Reproductive Aesthetics of the West," "The Combination of Goodness and Beauty that China was Prone to and the Unification of Beauty and Truth that the West was Prone to," The Intuitive of Chinese Aesthetics and the Analytic of the Western Aesthetics," "Chinese Opera and Modern Drama of the West." Prof. Zhou and his co-author Chenx Yan published a monograph of comparative aesthetics: *Outline of Comparative Aesthetics: China and the West,* which was the first monograph on global comparative aesthetics in China. His ideas on comparative aesthetics had been summed up, commented and paid much attention to, by many learned journals and papers. And his ideas had become the current opinions in this field and been received widely.

Sichuan Publishing House published a collection of Essays on *Comparative Aesthetics and Literature.* Hubei Publishing House also published another collection of essays: *Comparative Aesthetics and the Arts.* In 1984 Chinese society for aesthetics started meeting and discussing comparative aesthetics Chinese and the Western. Researches on comparative aesthetics have been developing universally, and something concrete comes up.

II

Generally speaking, the purport of comparative aesthetics in the global research is to discover the regular patterns and the laws. The regular patterns show the common characters of the West and China and the respective laws make difference between them.

Candidly, in this aspect, the systematic studies, from which some essential ideas have emerged, are the series of essays by Professor Zhou Lai Xiang, and his monograph: *Outline of Comparison between the Western and Chinese Aesthetics* (in this monograph, Professor Zhou cooperated with his student Chen Yan). Of course, there are other studies and some different opinions on this field, but they are not systematic. However, while we mainly introduce Professor Zhou's opinions, we will narrate the latter's notions partially, and thus have some integrated ideas.

Outline of Comparison between the Western and Chinese Aesthetics includes Prologue and other four parts. The Prologue mainly deals with the meanings and methodology of comparative aesthetics. The other four parts separately discuss aesthetic formations, aesthetic nature, aesthetic ideas and characters of art etc. In every part, the

discussion is unfolded according to three phases: ancient time, modern time and contemporary period. In other words, authors make the synchronous comparisons about the same conceptions and the same themes in the Occident and China. The followings are main ideas in this book that have prevailed in China today.

In the comparative research on aesthetic formations, Prof. Zhou realized that ancient aesthetics of the West was prone to analysis, and had the character of dialectical reason. But aesthetic studies in ancient China were of the intuitive and experience formation, which implied the spirit of rationality. Thereafter, in modern time, the occidental aesthetics had preferred anti-rationality or irrationality, and become sensitive experience formation more and more. To the contrary, modern aesthetics of China has broken away from the experience formation of ancient aesthetics, and is stressing more and more the dialectical reason, and emphasizing the theoretic nature. Therefore, the authors forecast that aesthetic formation in the future will be the harmonious unification of dialectical reason and sensitive experience.

On this point there are different perspectives. In 1984, there was a symposium on comparative aesthetics basing on the Occident and China, the discussion focusing the definition of aesthetic formation of ancient China. There were three different opinions: The first, agreed Prof. Zhou, that ancient aesthetics of China was the expression of intuitive experience which included the spirit of rationality. The second, because the aesthetic consciousness of ancient China was purely intuitive experience, it could not be named aesthetics in terms of the modern vocabulary. The third considered that aesthetic studies of ancient China also reflected dialectical reason which had high level of theory.

In the context of aesthetic nature, Prof. Zhou and his students, think that, the aesthetics of ancient China inclined to be ethical whereas modern trend breaks away from the ancient Western aesthetics that tended to be religious. China gradually began to break away from the ethical mode, and had the anti-ethical tendency. Modern aesthetics of the West also began to break away from the religious trend, and both pursued an aesthetic freedom, gradually attaining self-discipline in contemporary ages. The Western aesthetics had turned from its noumenal to psychological character, and emphasized desire and instinct of mankind. "From Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Freud to Jung, antirational aestheticians of the West made great efforts to free aesthetics from rational category, and set it in the perceptual life" (*Outline*, p.110). Comparatively, contemporary aesthetics of China has broken through the limitations of traditional epistemology and absorbed social practice in order to explore the third realm of aesthetics between the rational knowledge of science and perceptual ethical practice. This kind of aesthetics does not separate aesthetics from scientific knowledge and perceptual practice, and looks like independent realm of total self-discipline. Moreover, it is not a mixture of scientific knowledge and perceptual practice to deny its independent perspectives as aesthetic realm.

How to understand a combination of Chinese aesthetics with the Western aesthetics in the future? The authors observe, "If the contemporary aesthetics of the West

foster sensationalism and psychologism more and more, to be sure, the aesthetics of contemporary China has fostered rationalism and socialism more and more. Both are confronted with the huge challenge of the historical questions, how to combine the historical genesis of aesthetics with individual aesthetic actions? That means, how can aesthetics change from the qualitative analysis to quantitative analysis, from abstract analysis to concrete analysis, from pure theory to guarding practice. To meet this challenge we have to work a lot that would encompass historical and social researches, as well as studies in individuality and psychology, also including researches in the issues of rationality and consciousness, studies in consciousness and irrationality, because aesthetic actions organically are made of contradictions of history and individual, rationality and irrationality, consciousness and unconsciousness. Therefore, while we study sociological aesthetics, we have to assimilate the achievements of the Western psychological aesthetics. Thus we can form our own theoretical superiority to solve the aesthetic mystery" (*Outline*, p. 110).

Considering the aesthetic ideals, Prof. Zhou pointed out that, ancient aesthetics of both the Occident and China regarded harmony as the ideal of beauty. Beauty and harmony were two concepts, which were used to express the same thing simultaneously. Even though, harmony as the ideal of beauty had different inclinations, aesthetic harmony of the ancient Occident emphasized physical and formal qualities. But the aesthetic harmony of ancient China tended to be subjective, psychological, and emotional.

In Greece, Pythagoras used mathematics to study music. Pythagoras discovered that beauty of music was nothing but the harmony and unification of antithetic factors. Beauty of music must develop multiplicity into unification, and transform inharmonic into coherence. Heraclitus still thought that beauty was nothing but the coherence of diverse things. And the most beautiful music was made of diverse tones. Aristotle said, a beautiful thing was that, whose different parts must have a given arrangement; its volume should have a given size, so that its integration could emerge. To Aristotle, the integration of things was the harmony of tone as represented in the human body and physical forms.

Conversely, in ancient China, Confucius was the first to pay attention to the balance and harmony between feeling and reason. His aesthetic ideal was: "Pleasure, not licentiousness, sentiment not tragedy." Confucius looked for the golden medium of philosophy and thought that pleasure and sentiment should be controlled by reason in order to gain balance and harmony. Ancient Chinese poetics, developed by Confucius in a great work, *The Book of Songs (The Book of Odes)* maintained that a poem should be "soft and warm, honest and sincere." Its purport was to attain a harmonious state of feelings. Moreover, Confucian school was prone to the coherence between feelings and reason, man and man. Taoism preferred the unity of things and human beings. Zhuang Zi (about 369-286 B.C.) said, "Divine pleasure is the sovereign pleasure." For Zhuang Zi, heaven was a part of nature. Being harmonious with heaven meant being harmonious with nature. Zhuang Zi thought that the harmony could be up to the realm of aesthetic freedom in which "mind could travel and fly with every thing unlimitedly."

In ancient times, the differences of aesthetic ideals rooted in the respective cultural background. The aesthetic ideal of the ancient Occident was shaped by its background of the Western religious culture. The harmony of form was related with Greek philosophy in which number was regarded as the noumenon of the universe. Therefore, the nature of beauty had the relationship with number. The concept of form-harmony still was the nature of universe and the nature of human thinking. Thereby, aesthetic harmony tended to be the formata, and had the meaning of metaphysical philosophy. In the Middle Ages, the aesthetic harmony was related with God, and was due to God. Thus the aesthetic harmony meant the coherence of God and human being. To the contrary, aesthetic harmony of ancient China was the harmony of feelings and reason. And its aim was of adjusting human psyche, man and nature, in addition to social relationship of man and man. Its tendency was not the harmony between God and human, but the harmony between man and man. Thus, if the ancient aesthetics of the Occident fostered relationship with the celestial (God), the ancient aesthetics of China was of the terrestrial and secular. This character was formed by the ancient culture of patriarchal clan system.

In short, ancient aesthetic harmony as the ideal of beauty was consistent with the belief that sense and reason, body and soul could not be disintegrated, as also with the coherence between man and nature, man and society. Simultaneously that kind of aesthetic harmony was shaped by methods of simple dialectical thinking. Emphasis upon motion, relationship and unification of diverse factors was the mode of thinking in Greece. On the other hand, emphasis upon moderation, supplementation and complementation was the character of ancient philosophy of China. Therefore, ancient China could balance and adjust diverse factors into a stable, orderly harmonious and organic integration.

However, in modern times, following the establishment of capitalism, accompanied by the drastic contradiction between individual and society, following the awakening of human being and liberation of individual character as modern metaphysics stressed the disintegration and antithesis so also modern aesthetics broke through peaceful classic harmony, and emphasized subjectivity, contradiction, and antithesis. Therefore, sublime as a new concept of aesthetics replaced the aesthetic ideal of the ancient harmony. This was a general historical trend in both modern China and the modern West.

In the modern West, one who first talked about sublime was Edmund Burke. Although before Burke, in Roman Empire, there was Longinus to talk of it. But sublimity in Longinus did not go beyond the limitation of harmonious tone. Even though sublime in Longinus also was characteristic of expressing strong feeling, with astonishing power. But it still was only to please people. It concentrated on harmony, not antithesis. Burke separated beauty and sublimity, and established the principle of distinguishing them. Burke thought that beauty and sublimity rooted in two diverse desires of human being, one was "communication in society," and the other was "self-protection." The pleasure produced by the former was active without pain. When pleasure is caused by the harmonious response between aesthetic object and subject, without secular desires, this pure pleasure is aesthetic

pleasure. When pleasure is caused by conflict and antithesis between aesthetic object and subject, the conflict and antithesis cannot damage subject; the pleasure with pain is sublimity and the object is sublime. After Burke, Immanuel Kant has distinguished between beauty and sublimity from the point of view of philosophical aesthetics. He observes that, from the point of view of object, beauty is due to harmony of objective form, which produces pleasure. To the contrary, sublime object is "amorphous," and its measurelessness of quantity and limitlessness of power cannot make the subject take hold of its form. From the point of view of the subject, aesthetic pleasure is direct, and comes from the harmonious responsive motion between imagination and intelligence (reason) and harmonious form of object. But sublimity is indirect. When imagination and intelligence forced by amorphous object become impotential, the subject had to awake power of ethical reason. By virtue of the ethical rationality, subject overcomes the limitation of perceptual ego extricates from dire state of imagination and intelligence (reason), so that subject could defeat the oppression of natural object and change pain to pleasure. If sublimity in Kant mainly expresses conflicts between man and nature, sublimity in Hegel, in his theory of tragedy, discoveres conflict and antithesis between man and society. Hegel was the first to bring conflict into the theory of tragedy. But the realization of the ideal of one side damages the ideal of the other side. The damage is the prerequisite for the realization of every side, so that both sides have their one-sidedness. Thus the conflict, which damages both sides causes tragedy.

In China sublimity as aesthetic tendency appeared in the middle period of Ming Dynasty. Xu Wei (1521-1593), Li Zhi (1527-1602) and Tu Lun, three famous writers during that time, first showed that they preferred sublimity. In their opinion, the real astonishing aesthetic perception was accompanied by pain, all of them appreciating the aesthetic state including magnificence and joyfulness. But, in aesthetic history of China, one who first hit on the concepts of sublimity and tragedy was Wang Gou Wei, a genuine scholar. Mr. Wang was influenced by Kant and Schopenhauer, and distinguished between "magnificent beauty" and "fine beauty." But his magnificent beauty still did not break away from the aesthetic ideal of classical harmony between sense and reason, object and subject. He considered the magnificent beauty, as the result of disintegration of existent will. Thereby, the spirit of his magnificent beauty had stressed the disintegration and antithesis and has been characteristic of sublimity in modern aesthetics. Then Cai Yuan Pei (1968-1980) advocated "splendid beauty." He thought highly of the love tragedy of *A Dream in Red Mansions,* a famous novel written by Cou Xua Qing. Lu Xian, a great writer in modern China, still advocated "great beauty," "heroic beauty," and "majestic beauty," etc. He had the greatest esteem for the Romantic Movement. In his several essays, for instance, "On the fall of Lei Feng Tower," "On the fall of Lei Feng Tower Once Again," Lu Xian sharply criticized classical harmony as an aesthetic ideal, and advocated "a tragedy in which a beloved thing is destroyed." Accordingly Zhou Lei Xiang asserted that tragedy and sublimity as aesthetic ideal had become predominant trend in the aesthetic consciousness of modern China.

Currently, mainstream aesthetics in the West has diverted its attention from sublimity to ugliness. Mainstream aesthetics in today China has developed from disintegration of sublimity to revert the classic harmony. In essence, ugliness as an important factor of aesthetics never appeared until the contemporary time. Ugliness in ancient arts was not regarded as aesthetic essence. As Aristotle said, "It was harmless." Ugliness in ancient arts was subordinate and had no independent position. It also barely appeared in ancient arts. Just up to the contemporary time, following more and more drastic social contradictions with the rising of metaphysical thinking, ugliness as a factor of aesthetics climbed on the historical stage. Ugliness as disharmony, anti-harmony and extreme opponent of harmony appeared in aesthetic field. However, its appearance broke through the classic tranquility, through the classic harmonious cycle, and led to engender sublimity in contemporary time. In fact, the decisive element, which developed from unity and harmony, stable and static aesthetics of ancient time to modern aesthetic categories, such as sublimity, funniness and tragedy, is ugliness. It is ugliness that expedited several aesthetic categories in the contemporary period. As Bosanquet said, if there was not ugliness, the concrete changes of aesthetics in modern ages would not have engendered. Victor Hugo also expressed the same at the beginning of nineteenth century. He said, beauty was only a type, but ugliness could change unlimitedly. In modern thoughts, funniness, ugliness, and absurdity have prevalent influence on human lives. They are omni-existent. On the one hand, they created abnormality and fearfulness. On the other hand, they engendered laughter and funniness (See Victor Hugo: *Prologue of Cromwell*).

In China, ugliness as an important factor of aesthetics appeared after Ming Dynasty. At the end of Ming Dynasty, two famous poets, Yuan Hong Dao (1568-1610) and Yuan Zhong Dao (1570-1625) clearly pointed out that the best poem was one in which ugly parts and beautiful parts existed simultaneously. And they liked the ugly parts especially. This was the symbol of aesthetic change, and predicted the disintegration of classic harmony and the importance of ugliness. But up to the beginning of 20th century, ugliness just got its independent status. Xu Zhi Me (1896-1931) a modern poet, said: "My voice is like the sharp yell of owl in a graveyard, because the whole harmony of man had been killed thoroughly," (Xu Zhi Me, *On The Inner Criticism and My Attitude About Poetry,* Guang Hua Publishing House, 1925). Although the appearance of ugliness in contemporary time was the same in both the Occident and China, functions, positions and developing track of ugliness were different in both sides, because of the essential differences in social systems, cultures, and modes of thinking. Based on the antithesis principle, the Western culture reinforced disharmonious factors. Day after day, it had developed toward anti-harmony. Thereby, harmonious factors in its sublimity as aesthetic ideal had been lesser and lesser, whereas, ugliness and anti-harmonious factors have grown stronger. At last, beauty and sublimity have been neglected. Only ugliness has been spared, and become predominant. This is the important change from modern ages to contemporary time. In modern ages, ugliness was an active factor. It broke through and negated the classic harmony, but it

could not negate harmony itself. It was effective as a limited subsidiary factor. On the other hand, sublimity in modern aesthetics always changed from antithesis, conflicts and disharmony to new harmony at least. But when ugliness gained predominant position, and took hold of the crown of contemporary arts, it became an independent formation of aesthetics, instead of beauty and sublimity. Historically, in Auguste Rodin's sculptures, we find tight combination of beauty and ugliness, and we also find that beauty always wins in this combination at last. But in Charle Baudelair's poems, in Franz Kafka's novels, and in absurd dramas, we do not find the tight combination of beauty and ugliness. Ugliness has played a predominant role in those works. Baudelaire wanted to find beauty in evil or sin, and wrote *Flowers of Evil*. In the *Metamorphosis*, Kafka absurdly described evils and sin in contemporary society, in which evil and sin predominated everything. Thereupon, when it is not incredible Jean-Paul Sartre said, "reality never is beautiful, beauty only belongs to a fictitious value." In his essay, "On the Genesis of Art," he said, "the mission of art was to discover darkness and preserve it from disappearance." We can regard Sartre's opinion as artistic theory of ugliness and aesthetics of ugliness. Generally speaking, the development of ugliness in contemporary aesthetics enlarges the domain of aesthetics. But it also brings in some unwanted by-products.

Different from the Western tendency that led to ugliness, contemporary arts of China, by virtue of the development of sublimity, broke through the cycle of classic harmony. Contemporary arts reinforced and absorbed ugliness and disharmonious elements, and emphasized essential antithesis. But meanwhile, importantly, its development has been guarded by dialectical harmonious ideal, and considered dialectical harmony as a home to return. Thus, it never makes ugliness extreme. Despite its upset what the classic harmonious cycle will realize is not extreme ugliness but a new kind of beauty of dialectical harmony. Of course, it will be a long historical process to realize this aim.

Frankly speaking, there are several aesthetic scholars who disagree with Zhou Lai Xiang. They point out that, beauty, sublimity and ugliness as aesthetic categories are juxtaposed. In every historical period, they existed abreast, and they had the given connotations, which never change with the development of history. Both ancient and contemporary periods talk of beauty, sublime and ugliness. But in Zhou's opinion, beauty, sublimity and ugliness as aesthetic categories emerged from different periods of history. Ancient time was a world of beauty without sublimity and ugliness. In modern ages, by virtue of the development of ugliness, sublimity, tragedy and comedy in a strict manner appeared on historical stage. In the contemporary West, ugliness had been predominant. But in contemporary China, ideal of beauty had changed from classic harmony, through sublimity to dialectical harmony. There are two sharp different opinions in today's China about comparative aesthetics Occidental and Chinese.

On the nature of art, Zhou says, there are different views of art in different times. Ancient art, whether in ancient China, or in the ancient West, was art of beauty, or was harmonious art, or in other words, was art of classicism. It orderly sought for unification

between imitation and expression, reality and ideal, emotion and rationality, connotation and form. Nevertheless, it also looked for harmony, balance and orderly unity between factors of expressive form. Zhou thinks that classicism has two meanings. In a narrow sense classicism is Neo Classicism of the seventeenth century Europe. In a broad sense, classicism is used by Zhou, to refer to all the arts of ancient times before modern industrialization. In other words, classicism considers harmonious beauty as the aesthetic ideal. This notion is different from that of other scholars. Generally speaking, in China, many aestheticians and literary theorists think that "realism" and "romanticism" occurred in ancient time, and both of them had run through modern ages. They date the genesis of realism and romanticism to the epics and tragedies in ancient Greek, and *The Book of Songs* and *Chu Poem* in ancient China.

According to Zhou, although ancient arts in both the traditions were classicist, yet every side had its particular stress. Classic arts in ancient China were prone to subjective expression, ideal, feelings and poetry. In the ancient Occident classic arts were prone to imitation, reproduction, reality, intelligence (reason) and plasticity. Ancient China was poetic. And its poetry, musical dance and calligraphy got splendid achievements. Conversely, the West was hometown of painting, and its sculpture, painting, epic and drama bore excellent fruits. Comparatively, in the West, sculpture laid particular stress on anatomy of human body; painting was particularity about focal perspective and regarded reproducing objects as its main mission. In ancient China sculpture without anatomy of human body, painting without perspectives, paid much attention to describe the spirit and the meaning of object, and to permit the focal perspective to emphasize the interests of colour and touches. Their aim was to express the subjective emotions. In the ancient West, drama mainly was made of dialogues, and paid much attention to narrate plot and events. In the Western drama imitation was dominant. But in ancient China, drama mainly was made up of songs, laid particular stress on stylized performance and skills. In Chinese drama, subjective expression was predominant. Calligraphy becomes a fine art, because China had expressive tradition. Line and colour could be used to express subjective feelings. But in the West, the imitation of art could not develop calligraphy. Generally, subjective arts of ancient China sought for the union of subject and object. Thus, artistic theory of China developed a maxim: "poetry expresses will." It asserted that "poetry should create poetic conception." Conversely, based on objectivity, art in ancient West went in quest for union of individuality and generality. Thus, it developed "imitation theory," "genre-character" and "personally typical character." It is important to repeat the following: both the Occidental and Chinese arts in ancient time had some particular stresses, but both of them still belonged to classicism. Of course, the particular stresses were within the limits of harmony, of expression and imitation, of emotion and reason. For example, the Western art considered painting as its representative: "There is painting in poetry," whereas ancient Chinese art regarded poetry as its representative: "There is poetry in painting." These characteristics were sharply and essentially dissimilar in modern and contemporary

conditions. In modern and contemporary ages particular stress is laid on antitheses of expression to reproduction (imitation), of reality to ideal. This antithesis led to different movements such as "Realism" and "Romanticism." Consequently, what classic art sought for was beauty, harmony, not antithesis and sublimity. It is Classicism, neither Realism nor Romanticism that defines the ancient art.

It is inevitable that other aestheticians have different ideas in China. Some of them think that ancient arts of China had only expression without any kind of imitation, without painting and that the ancient arts of the West had only reproduction without any kind of expression, without poetry. Some think that "expression" and "reproduction" are not the concepts in terms of which the ancient Western art and ancient Chinese art could be distinguished.

In modern and contemporary society, following the change of aesthetic ideals of sublimity to ugliness, Realism developed into Naturalism, then into Surrealism and photo-realism. Romanticism had developed into Concrete-Expressionism, then to Abstract-Expressionism. To the contrary, in China, accompanied by the change of the aesthetic ideal from classic harmony to sublimity, then to beauty of dialectical harmony, changed from Realism and Romanticism to disintegration of Modernism. It will create a monastical art which will really get dialectical unity of expression and reproduction, ideal and reality.

Whether in the modern West or in contemporary China, artists were not satisfied with the ideal of harmony and principle that "poetry and painting have common principles." They looked for the integration and antithesis between reality and ideal, imitation and expression, emotion and reason. Thus they also made the antithesis between poetry and painting the arts that developed independently of each other. This also encouraged the development of the theory of artistic type, and the creation of character changed from the genre-character to the individualized typical-character.

In the modern West, Lessing was the first to shake the traditional ideal, which believed that poetry, and paintings have common principles. In *Laocoon*, Lessing pointed out that poetry and painting were antithetic to one another. In Ming dynasty of China, Zhang Dai, a prose writer, also doubted the tradition of "ut pictura poesis." He said, "If poets follow the principles of painting, then the poetry they write is precarious; so also if the painters follow the principles of poetry, then their painting is a failure." (*Collection of Lang Huan,* "A Letter to Bao Yan Je"). Rejection of the principle that "poetry and painting have common laws" clearly discovered the disintegration and antithesis between poetry and painting, expression and imitation, ideal and reality. Those integrations and antitheses had developed into two kinds of artistic tendencies. The first was Realism, which faced the exterior objective world and portrayed blood and flesh of life. The second was Romanticism, which confronted the interior world and expressed emotion and will in one's deep heart. Therefore, in order to make imitation more concrete, more precise and more true to life the Realist artists made much effort to avoid expressing their subjective feelings and attitudes. They let plot, heroes or events in work express themselves, and let their own subjective

feelings and attitudes of minds naturally permeate in plot, heroes and events. To the contrary, for the sake of expressing the interior subjective world incisively and vividly, Romanticism created or imaged figures and heroes to display their ideals and individuality. In one word, Realism imitated the full and complicated individualized typical character. Romanticism vividly expressed the surging mind of the individual world.

After the end of nineteenth century, especially in the twentieth century, modernist arts developed into pluralistic period without entry to mainstream. There were many-isms in this period, such as: Naturalism, Decadent, Aestheticism, Impressionism, Imagism, Formalism, Futurism, Expressionism, Existentialism, Structuralism, Neo-Realism, Surrealism, Magic Realism, Photo-Realism, Stream of Consciousness, Drama of the Absurd, and Black Humor. But seeing through those schools, we still could find two basic tendencies of arts. One came from Realism, through Naturalism, and developed into Surrealism and Photo-Realism. The other came from Romanticism, through Concrete-Expressionism, and changed into the Abstract Expressionism. Both of them were the results of the extreme development of modern Realism and Romanticism. Despite the fact that Naturalism had the same doctrine as that of Realism and looked for describing subjective reality, it made the artistic functions of imitation and reproduction extremized and absolutized. On the one hand, it wanted to mirror every thing in reality including ugly, dirty, evil, and intolerable things. Because everything in reality could be represented in arts. Thus, it enlarged the descriptive domain of art. On the other hand, it wanted to avoid any emotional or subjective expression, and to make description absolutely objective. In order to keep the original feature of descriptive objects from being obstructed and being whitewashed, Naturalism sacrificed Realist principle of creating artistic type. Thus, it developed from the individualized typical character into the extreme non-type and antitype. It changed the Realist attitude that an artist could not express his subjective feelings directly, into another extreme which rejected to show any subjective tendency of politics and thoughts. But more extremely, Photo-Realism thought that art must be as lifelike as photograph, and the artist should be as objective as a camera. Thereby, Photo-Realism went farther away than Naturalism. Evolving from Romanticism, Expressionism logically led to another extreme of expressive arts. Hence Martiss, a founder of Fauvism, pointing out the principles of Expressionism, announced that, what he sought for was "expression." The whole arrangement of his paintings were to express the emotional world of the artist. Although Cubism and Pablo Picasso's arts did not cast off the influence of objective things, it made them out of shape or used geometric forms. Therefore, we can call Cubism "Concrete Expressionism." But in Wassily Kandinsky, who developed abstract art, paintings became symphony made up of points, lines, colours, and had entirely lost any objective figure. In Kandinsky's hands, paintings tended to become musical. Kandinsky took painting toward extreme point to create Abstract Expressionism. Comparatively, the Abstract Expressionism went farther away from Romanticism. In fact, Romanticism had not cast off objectivity. It tried to express the interior world and ideal through abstracting and exaggerating life images. But Expressionism had cast off all life images and rationality, and its expressions concentrated on the unconscious.

Whereas Modernist arts of the contemporary West was tending to be dualistic, China, in the 1980s hit on the improvement rush. Almost all of aesthetic thoughts and artistic schools of the West unprecedently were introduced and translated to Chinese, and had great influence on aesthetic theories and creation of arts. In the last decade, artistic schools emerged in large numbers, such as: "Obscure Poetry," The "Third Generation's Poetry," "New Trend Novel," "New Trend Painting," "Sentimental Literature," "Vanguardian Literature," "New Realism," and "Documentary Literature." These schools in several aspects were similar to the modern arts of the West. They had an idea that subject and object develop into extreme opposition consciously or unconsciously. For instance, "New Trend Painting," "New Trend Novel," and the "Third Generation's Poetry" were similar to Expressionism. To the contrary, "New Realism," "Documentary Literature" relatively were similar to Naturalism and Photo-Realism. But some artists swung between two poles. Famous film director, Zhaung Yi Mu, for example, eagerly expressed subjective world in his films, such as: *Red Sorghum, Ju Dou,* and *Raising Red Lanterns*. He used strong passion, ridiculous imaginations and swift scenes to exhibit an idealized reality. Then in his recent film, *Qiou Ju Went To Count,* the Zhang turned from subjective world to pure objective world and created the documentary style. It seemed that there were no special performance, no actors. Everything in the film was natural and belonged to life itself. Zhang Yi Mu said, Qiou Ju Went To Count was a turn in the course of his venture. It took care of man, took care of perceptual and plentiful man and man's fate. It was compensation for his former films, which were too idealized, too ideologized and too emotional. Its aim was to mix or combine idea, image, passion sensation and reality together. In a few words, the dualistic development of arts in contemporary China, the antithesis of subject to object has attained some one-sided achievements, and has prepared prerequisite conditions for a higher dialectical synthesis.

Moreover, in today China, besides Zhou and his co-author who did comparative researches with an international dimension, there are many other kinds of comparative studies. Some are monographs. Some are essays. The topics include: aesthetic categories and concepts in the Western and Chinese traditions, concrete comparative studies of painting, music, novel, drama and poetry in both. For example: Hu Tao's, "Zhu Guang Qian and Aesthetics of Benedetto Croce" (*Journal of Su Zhou University,* Issue 2, 1985); Wen Ru Ming's, "Lu Xiun's Aesthetic Thoughts in His Early Days and Japanese Aesthetics;" Qiao De Wen's "Differences of Tragedy in China and the West" (*Drama Art*, Issue 1, 1982); Yu Chen Kun, "Comparison of Comedy in China and The West" (*Journal of Jin Yang,* Issue 3, 1984); Cao Shun Qing's "Theory of Feeling Object and Theory of Imitating Object," "Research-Notes of Aesthetic thought in China and the West" (*Study of Literature and Arts*, Issue 4, 1983). All the essays mentioned above studied concrete problems of comparative aesthetics, and had unique achievements. Their analyses have been very subtle and precise.

III

Chinese comparative aesthetics has made great achievements. With the further development of China, improvement in the further correlation between the Western and Chinese aesthetics will deepen and enlarge the important spheres of conceptual issues in the philosophy and praxis of art and art criticism.

The development of Chinese comparative aesthetics must pay attention to two important points. First of all, the mission of Chinese comparative aesthetics is to find out the general laws that both sides have and the respective laws that one side has, but not to study the issue of inferiority and superiority on the either side. We need neither Westernization, nor rejection of the influence of the West. The mission of Chinese comparative aesthetics is to absorb all superior benefits of the Western aesthetic culture, and through correlation with one another develop the traditional aesthetic culture of China into a high level. Meanwhile, we should introduce the aesthetic culture of China to the whole world. Another most important point, we have neglected so far, is to pay attention to our Sourth-East Asian brotherhood. Aesthetic culture in the Indian subcontinent as early as the 7th c. B.C., in the writings of Yaska the lexicographer, influenced Friedrich Max Müller's ideas on comparative mythology. Bharata's dramaturgy is almost simultaneous to Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Indian aesthetic culture of two millennia and a half should immediately be taken into account by the Chinese scholars. Professor Ananta Sukla's noble efforts in starting publication of the first journal in comparative aesthetics, first in the Indian subcontinent, *The Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics* (inception 1978) has not yet been sufficiently noticed by the Chinese aestheticians who must come forward for comparing the Chinese and Indian ideas on the vital issues of aesthetics in general with a view to developing an aesthetic brotherhood in cultivating their age-old cultural relationship and founding a trend in Indo-Chinese aesthetic culture. Only one Chinese aesthetician, Zhou Lai Xiang has published in this Indian journal of comparative aesthetics. The journal needs an urgent collaboration by the Chinese scholars for a healthy tie of aesthetic activities in the Oriental culture. China should look to the Orient as well, only the Occident cannot enrich its aesthetic culture.

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Frappier, Eilhart and *The Roman de Tristan*

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> Rien n'offre un caractère de simplicité dans les multiples questions qui concernent les romans de *Tristan.*
>
> —J. Frappier, *Cahiers de civilization médiévale.*

Extraordinarily rich and diverse in their plurality of story and theme, highly complex in matters of intertextuality, and yet still evocative of mankind's postlapsarian existence, the medieval *Tristan* texts challenge the curious and frighten the cowardly.

The story's compulsive passion, such as Eilhart von Oberg's raw version reveals, shows us a Tristan and Isolde[1] driven, for all intents and purposes, insane and irrational by their love. Their rash actions, in a society that greatly valued conformity, illustrate brutish behavior that admits of no resistance, no exceptions, and no logic. No manifestation of will power can overcome their undistracted death wish, their focused drive to self-destruction. From the hero's point of view, Isolde may be viewed as a metaphor for pride, i.e., Tristan's refusal to capitulate to a destiny associated with commonness.[2] As Shakespeare's proud hero in *Coriolanus* puts it so powerfully, "I had rather be their servant in my own way than sway with them in theirs" (II, i). Like Coriolanus, this *Chevalier du Soleil, Chevalier de l'Ombre,* Tristan cannot compromise with any aspect of his fateful life.

But space does not permit here an extended metatextual commentary. It is Eilhart's *Tristrant* (ca. 1170), a fascinating text in the *Tristan* universe, that represents for us a version heretofore insufficiently appreciated by many scholars. Arthurian critics, particularly on the Continent (west of the Rhine), have tried to ignore its importance—probably because it was readily available to them for so many years only in a kind of paraphrase, in English, found in Gertrude Schoepperle's two volume study first published in 1913.[3] Recently, the French scholar D. Buschinger published a thesis on Eilhart's *Tristrant,* and subsequently, a careful parallel edition and line by line French translation, with detailed textual commentaries.[4] Then, J. W. Thomas published his idiomatic English version with a full introduction in 1978.[5] It can be said that the text is receiving the attention it deserves, for of all the numerous surviving parts of the corpus, it represents a version related to the original *estoire*, or archetype.[6]

My stated purpose is to call attention to a few comparative matters raised by a close reading of Eilhart. Earlier critical treatments of several of the notions to be discussed lack sufficient nuance, notably those by Jean Frappier.

In his now classic 1963 article, the late Sorbonne professor deals with the *version commune*, *version courtoise*, reviews several previous scholarly studies on the *matière Tristan*, then analyzes in some detail the love potion question and the Ordeal of God/ ambiguous oath episode.[7]

Frappier's assessment takes pains to show how both Beroul and Eilhart's texts reveal the influence of *courtoisie* but not *fin'amor*, a "religion of love" that stresses Tristan's torments and nearly masochistic suffering for Isolde (as in Thomas d'Angleterre's version). Frappier emphasizes the parallel structure of Eilhart and Beroul's versions, seeing in them not an exquisite, ecstatic, highly introspective love casuistry, but rather a drama of fatality and illegitimate love. What is missing here is nuance: Eilhart does in fact describe love's torments on several occasions (e.g. the *Liebes-monolog*, Thomas trans. 75-77); elsewhere, Tristan is beaten, kicked and humiliated because of his love for Isolde (Thomas trans. 126-27). In addition to presenting the idea of love (*in nuce* at least) as its own justification, Eilhart also deals with the love philtre in an ambiguous way. Frappier discusses the love philtre theme at length (266-80) and argues that its magic effects end in Beroul so that the narrative can move the lovers out of the Forest of Morois—to continue the story. What is lacking here is an appreciation for the ambiguity in Eilhart: this author has it both ways, for the love drink is both fatal, forever, and yet wears off—more or less (Thomas trans. 102-103).

Let us now proceed to six key issues that need further clarification.

1. *The King of Ireland.* In the so-called *version courtoise*, Tristan sails to Ireland to bring back *the woman*, the one whose beautiful hair ostensibly prompted Tristan's uncle, King Mark of Cornwall to ask for her hand. Tristan's wooing expedition is motivated in both versions by the evil, suspicious barons who hate the young hero and fear him as Mark's potentially designated heir.[8] The *version courtoise* clearly stresses more the role of Queen Isolde, the princess' mother, the motivation for which is that she knows herbs and salves to treat and heal Tristan's dragon wounds. On the other hand, Eilhart's version emphasizes more the character of Isalde's father (the Morholt's brother); he is a forceful and well sketched character truly grieved at the loss of his warrior kinsman.

In a lively scene where Tristrant is placed at a physical disadvantage—in a bathtub—Eilhart's Isalde at first threatens to avenge her uncle's death, then realizes through the eloquent intercession of Brangene, that if Tristrant dies, she, Isalde, will be forced to marry the deceitful steward, the royal cupbearer who falsely claimed he slew the dragon. As Eilhart describes it, Isalde "[...] thought for a moment and again became kind to him. The inner turmoil left her, and forgetting her deep grief, she ordered [...] new clothes [...] for him" (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 70).

Isalde then appears before her father to wield from him a rash boon, i.e., that he will grant a pardon to the knight who killed the dragon.[9] The maiden suggests that before a feudal court of law, the cowardly steward will be proven a liar and that she can bring forward the one who knows precisely how and where the dragon died. Thus, before his

assembled prices and dukes, the king is obliged to kiss Tristrant as a sign of his pardon. And of course, in a brief verbal joust, Tristrant outscores and humiliates the lying high steward, who then is exiled in shame—just as in the *version courtoise* (Friar Robert, *Saga*, trans. Schach 70). Now Tristrant must ask, on behalf of his uncle, for the hand of the beautiful maiden Isalde. Her father the king consents, charges Tristrant by oath to care for her with honor, while exhorting ominously (and ironically) the hero that King Mark should indeed possess her,

> [...] for you have caused her much grief, and I am afraid that, if she should begin to brood about this, you two would not live as you should (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 74).

By stressing the feudal context—the allusions to blood revenge, the council of barons, the word and gesture of pardon for the killing of a kinsman—Eilhart's version of the episode is more logical and better motivated, even as Isalde's intercession before the assembled court, on behalf of Tristrant, convinces everyone concerned of the hero's valor (cf. also Robert's point about the barons' threats to withdraw from Mark's service unless he marries; *Saga*, trans. Schach, p. 50).

2. *Tristan's Banishment*. Because Tristrant strove for honor, virtue, glory, and fame, the jealous barons slander him. This is the true sense of the biting wound by the black dragon that afflicts the Knight of the Sun. As Eilhart puts it in a "moralizing digression,"[10]

> they envied him because they themselves were not upright and brave. That has often happened since, and still occurs to many an honest man that a worthless fellow concedes him nothing and belittles his fame. When he hears any praise of the upright man that he can't contradict, he may just go away and say, 'it's a lie.' That ill befits any of you if you consider it carefully, for no one ever won lasting fame and honor in love by such behavior (Eilhart, Thomas trans., 83)

But unlike the confused, oscillating, and rather unconvincing King Mark in the *version courtoise*,[11] Eilhart's character simply discovers Tristrant and Isolde *in flagrante delicto*—

> ... the king left the lords to retire and found beside his bed the bold Tristrant with the queen in his arms. He was kissing her and pressing her against his breast very lovingly. Dismayed, he flew into a terrible rage and said to Tristrant, 'that is evil love. How can I keep my honor with a traitor like you causing me such grief?' (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 85)

Tristrant must leave the court forthwith, but of course the lovers cannot survive for long in separation. Surprised and caught in broad daylight, Eilhart's adulterers appear unquestionably guilty—for the moment at least, or until Mark can begin to forgive them (as he does in Beroul), after the telling tryst under the pine tree (linden tree in an orchard for Eilhart, Thomas trans. 86-88). In a similar situation in Gottfried, the banishment is in fact quite unmotivated and Mark acts *volens-nolens* (Gottfried, Hatto trans. 258). We will return to this problem later.

3. *The Wolf Trap in Mark's Court:* After the pitiful life in the forest episode, Eilhart's Tristan finally does go into exile and takes up with the Knights of the Round Table, led by King Arthur. Through another deceptive rash boon, the hero finds himself re-admitted to Mark's court, but this time the *faulx,* or the sharp blades of a wolf trap, wound and cut him sharply, as he tries to return to the arms of his beloved: "[...] the blood swelled so strongly from the cuts that the several thicknesses of cloth would not hold it back and his leg became all bloody" (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 108).

It is Sir Kay who devises a sadistic way to conceal the evidence from Mark—as Tristrant is "bleeding like a stuck pig" (108). After Gawain pushes Kay down onto it, all the Knights of the Round Table fall onto the blade board, become wounded and bloody, suffer excruciating pain, and in the commotion, provide cover for the lovers' twilight tryst. Like monsters storming around in the night (as Mark describes them), the knights limp away, thus mocking the host-guest relationship.

This humorous fabliaux-like episode recalls Beroul's account of the *escondit* ordeal at the ford when Isolde spreads her legs wide and mounts on Tristan the pilgrim's back to cross the water.

Another analogy in the *version courtoise* is the bloody ordeal of the white flour stratagem whereby Tristan the long jumper gets caught, although, not surprisingly, Gottfried's King Mark remains still undecided because he sees no footprints in the flour.[12] Put simply, Eilhart prefers directness, graphic realism, and truculent humor to the delicate pirouetting and ethical ambiguities inherent in the story, particularly for a Thomas d'Angleterre or a Gottfried von Strasburg.

(One can further argue this point by noting, for example, the handling of the episode of blocking the sun from Isolde's face in the forest. For Eilhart, Mark simply places his glove on her person, even though there is no mention of the sun. For Beroul, the glove on the branch covers a ray of sunlight that is shining on Isolde's lovely countenance. Brother Robert has it this way also, but Gottfried, ever more florid, has Mark stop up the window of the grotto with foliage and flowers.)[13]

4. *Isalde of Karahes.* In another adventure, Tristan the brave wins the hand of Havelin's daughter, the sister of Kehenis, but the marriage is not consummated. "The noble lady bore this patiently" (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 117). While riding one day across a brook, water splashes up under her dress to Isalde's thigh. "'Wasser, du bist fremde!'"—"'Water,'" she said, "'you surprise me! Bad luck to you! How dare you jump further up under my dress than any knight's hand dares to go or ever went?'" (117). This audacious splash incident touches off a major confrontation between the now shamed and humiliated brother, Kehenis, and the ostensibly impotent Tristrant. The latter exculpates his unusual behavior by claiming that his spouse Isalde of Karahes has not treated him kindly enough to deserve his intimate approach. In answer to his brother-in-law he argues:

> You shouldn't get angry before you know how things are. There is a lady who for my sake, alone and in front of others, treats a dog better than your sister has treated me (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 118).

This of course leads the two to "Tintanjol" where Tristrant can win his wager and demonstrate how sweetly his beloved Isalde caresses Utant the hound (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 120-22).

In the *version courtoise,* Tristan excuses his behavior by describing his undying love for a maiden whose beauty and gentility greatly eclipsed that of his spouse (i.e., Kehenis' sister!).[14]

5. *Isalde's Hair Shirt.* Eilhart has his hero undergo an ignominious and humiliating experience that is then counterbalanced by Isalde's sympathetic self-mortification. Tristrant the leper appears in disguise before his beloved, is recognized by her, then beaten, kicked, and driven off by her squires—apparently because he committed a tiny infraction against her honor. Not unmindful of certain scenes in the Lancelot-Guenevere story, this rude scene assuages Isalde's wrath as she laughs in glee at the pitiful sight. But then, in expiation, Isalde takes to wearing a hair shirt, or *hemd härin,* the "leather corselet" of Thomas d'Angleterre's version.[15] The *chemise de crin* or *cilice* irritates her soft and tender white skin, inflicts anguished fretting and painful agony, and reminds her that she must make amends for the blows suffered by Tristrant. This motif has been attributed to Thomas to underscore the "religion of love" he exalts, a concept fraught with ascetic joys and scrupulous titillation (Frappier, *Tristan* 265). However, the notion already exists fully in Eilhart's version, even if it does appear in a somewhat elemental and primitive form.

6. *King Mark's Oscillation.* Of all the characters in the *Tristan* romances, Mark remains the most problematic. As Hatto has observed (Intro. 27-28), Mark's magnanimity and devotion toward the child issued from his sister's elopement, his blind passion for Isolde, and his courtly and often selfless behavior are offset by the tyrannical cuckold's black fits of rage. Mark wavers at the flimsiest suggestion of Isolde's innocence and succumbs again and again to his lust for a wife who loves someone else. Doubt and suspicion are followed by crass certainly that rips away the scales of illusion. This heart, also noble, cries out with tragic implications, although only a modern reader would appreciate such a viewpoint. Deceived husbands are just comical or pathetic in medieval literature; and unchaste wives or queens are punished.

Eilhart's Mark oscillates between punishing and forgiving the lovers because of a) his shame over the loss of honor from the adulterous situation; and b) because he cherishes his dear nephew and beautiful wife. This idea appears *in nuce* in Eilhart's text and became amplified at length in the *version courtoise*, where it takes on a moral dimension. When, for example, Mark receives the letter of repentance (written by Ugrim) from Tristrant, his generous nature emerges:

> ...he told his counselors how they had been lying when he found them in he forest and swore that Tristrant had never had her as his woman, that he only had always been kind to her and too fond of her (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 102).

Thus does the King of Cornwall continue to delude himself regarding the truth.

Unfortunately, this brief sketch cannot permit a more extensive foray into Eilhart's varied feudal usages. A study of the love rhetoric so mindful of the *Roman d' Eneas, Chrétien's Cligés,* and Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneide* must be postponed. The gloss-like miniature Joy of the Court in Eilhart's Gariole-Nampetenis episode will be examined elsewhere. We must pass over as well Eilhart's fascinating narrative technique that allows for numerous puns, forward references, a "guarantee of authenticity," and the frequent inclusion of audience perspectives (quite unlike Thibaut de Champagne's lyrical style).[16]

We can perceive behind his tale a dark, male-oriented, and somewhat less sophisticated temperament that, while not exactly relishing moral ambiguities (as found in Beroul, Thomas d'Angleterre, and Gottfried), find irresistible the attraction of the dilemma faced by the two lovers.

But Eilhart's version reveals aspects of the story heretofore recognized only in the French tellings or later Germanic tradition. Eilhart provides a greater role for Isalde's father (a stress that Gottfried reiterates); this is a distinction that adds logic to the familial context in Ireland.

For Eilhart, the true reason for Tristrant's banishment from Mark's court is the fact that the King catches them red-handed. The German author prefers pedestrian realism to gray amorality. His graphic and truculent style can be appreciated especially in the episode of the wolf trap blades. It offers to Eilhart and his readers/listeners a chance to snigger at Arthur's noble knights.

A further distinction may be noted in Eilhart's handling of the Isalde of Karahes/ audacious splash episode. The subtle difference—namely, that Eilhart's version stresses Tristrant's complaint about Isalde's unkind treatment of him—strikes us as crucial in assessing Eilhart's interpretation of his model. *The version courtoise,* on the other hand, emphasizes Tristan's fidelity in love to his star-crossed Isalde of Ireland.

Similarly, the focus of our discussion on the hair shirt worn by Tristrant's dear Isalde—to empathize with her lover's suffering—urges scholars to use the term "courtly" with more caution and nuance. Finally, King Mark's wavering attitude toward the lovers turns up as early as Eilhart's telling, i.e., Mark's simultaneous shame over the dishonor of the doubtless adulterous situation and inability to act decisively because of his devotion to his wife and nephew, form part of Eilhart's version. Mark's oscillating character was not invented by Thomas d'Angleterre.

The above remarks lead us to the inevitable conclusion that Eilhart von Oberg's seminal, powerful, and original text needs re-evaluation both by *Tristan* scholars in particular and by Arthurian scholars in general.

Notes and References

[1] Tristrant and Isalde are forms used here to describe Eilhart's characters; Tristan and Isolde will designate the characters in general terms. See further, R.J. Cormier, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1980.

[2] See Eilhart von Oberg, Thomas trans. 107, *Tristrant*.

[3] G. Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolt*. For earlier editions of Eilhart by German scholars, see the bibliography in David J. Shirt, *The Old French Tristan Poems*, 57.

[4] Danielle Buschinger, *Le Tristrant d'Eilhart von Oberg*; Eilhart von Oberg, Eilhart von Oberg, *Tristrant*, ed., tr. D. Buschinger.

[5] Hereafter referred to as Eilhart, Thomas trans.

[6] Buschinger (intro., ed./tr. XI, XVII-XXVI), with regard to the *estoire*, interprets Eilhart's poem as an *adaptation courtoise* of a lost Old French romance.

[7] See Bedier, *Le Roman de Tristan par Thomas*; Jean Frappier, "Structure et sens du Tristan."

[8] Friar Robert, *The Saga of Tristram and Isönd*, trans. Schach, 51; cf. Gottfried von Strasburg, *Tristan*, trans. Hatto 180ff. See Cormier 1980: 69-75.

[9] See Friar Robert, *Saga*, trans. Schach 77. See also Frappier, "Le Motif du 'don contraignant"; R. Dubuis, "Yvain et Iwein;" Ph. Ménard, "Le Don en blanc," argues rightly for folkloric, i.e., non-Celtic origins.

[10] Eilhart, *Tristrant*, ed., tr. Buschinger, p. 245.

[11] See, for example, Friar Robert, *Saga*, tr. Schach 81-94 (includes the Ordeal of God episode). On this topic, see below.

[12] Gottfried, *Tristan*, tr. Hatto 242. See below.

[13] Eilhart, *Tristrant*, Thomas trans., p. 100; Beroul, *Romance of Tristan* 184-85. (Ewert provides bibliographic references and details on this motif.)

[14] Thomas d'Angleterre, *Roman de Tristan*, trans. Hatto 320. Cf. Friar Robert, *Saga*, trans. Schach 126. Otherwise, an old wonld and a promise to Our Lady keep him from performing in bed, as told to Isolde of the White hands (Bédier, 166).

When Tristrant becomes angry at Queen Isolde because of the beating he suffers from her squires, he leaves and joyfully consummates his marriage with his wife (Eilhart, Thomas trans. 127).

[15] Eilhart adverts to it seven times: Thomas trans. 128, 130 (2 mentions), 131 (3 mentions), 135; cf. Eilhart, ed., tr. Buschinger, vv. 7164-7170 (*hemdlein herin*, mentioned in all three manuscript traditions). Cf. also Thomas de'Anglterre, Douce Fragment, vv. 741-771, trans. Hatto, 336. See Jean Larmat, "La Souffrance dans le *Tristan* de Thomas" 369-385 (esp. on the cilice 376, associated with Thomas d' Angleterre).

[16] Cf. M.J. Delage, "Quelques notes" 211-219, interfaces between *Erec et Enide*, Cligés, the "joie de la Cort," and the *Tristan*.

For an example of a pun, see Eilhart, Thomas trans. 59, where Tristrant speaks scornfully to Morholt: "That's all the tribute you'll get" (*Der Zins*)—referring both to the splinter from his sword and to Morholt's purpose in coming to Cornwall.

For authorial assurances, see Buschinger ed., vv. 9456-57 (p. 751): "Ebhart (=Eilhart) gutten gezug hat,/dass ess recht alsuss ergat" (E. qui s'appuie sur de bons témoins,/vous assure que c'est bien ainsi que tout s'est passé). For audience perspectives, see F. Goldin, ed., tr., *Lyrics* 443-53.

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Clefts and Bridges of Eros: East and West Side Story of the Poetry of Octavio Paz

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Eyes that can see Oh what a rarity.

—William Carlos Williams

Towards the end of the forties, Octavio Paz (b. 1914), who was already then considered one of the most distinguished Mexican writers, entered his "violent season:" turning his back on the cherished mentors from the *Contemporáneos* group, he abandoned their brand of "pure poetry"—following the postsymbolist line of Paul Valéry and Juan Ramon Jimīnez—for one of the most virulent and daring movements of the avant-garde: surrealism.[1] Actually, what is surprising is that it took him so long: as he himself recalls it to Guibert (213), he came in contact with surrealists as early as 1938; during the war (*Búsqueda* 63), he established close friendship with their "colony" in Mexico and, when the war ended, he associated himself with their group in France.

This was not the first time that surrealism was used by a leading Hispanic poet to exorcise a diehard tradition. In the late twenties, some of the brightest members of the so-called "Generation of 1927"—like Federico García Lorca, Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Cernuda or Rafael Alberti—took up its challenge and exploded the very same tradition of "pure poetry" which had shaped their poetic beginnings. In either case, the aesthetic lesson of "pure poetry" was not completely forgotten and left its imprint on the following surrealist phase.[2] However, the historical parallel ends here: while in Spain the surrealist craze was thwarted by the oncoming cataclysms of the thirties, for Paz, the "violent season" of the fifties was but a way-station towards an even more experimental and explosive period of the sixties and seventies.

The cycles *Aguila o sol* (1951; *Eagle or Sun*), *La estación violenta* (1958; Violent Season), and the essay "El arco y la lira" (1956; *The Bow and the Lyre*) probably offer the best of Pazian poetry and criticism from the surrealist decade. In the Mexican writer, both of these activities go hand in hand, as in so many cases of the post symbolist literature, and together advance one of the most ambitious and self-conscious literary projects in Spanish America.

Arco is the first sustained attempt of Paz to formulate a kind of philosophy of modern poetry.[3] Romantic speculation, surrealist concept of art and its political stance combine under the Heideggerian umbrella. Poetry is viewed as an inquiry into being effected

through language. But more specifically—more romantically—it is a search for transcendence, for the "other shore" (*la otra orilla*), and for the other. It is a mythical quest in which and through which fragmented man is reunited with his "other self" and, together, the splinters recover their original nature. Thus, leading man back to his lost paradise, poetry, as envisioned by Paz, transcends language and history (13).

Fortunately, this somewhat exalted dream of art is revitalized by a parallel drawn between poetry and *eros*, and, above all, by the mythology surrounding sexual union. The two emplotments mirror each other: *eros* is charted as an allegory—as a metaphoric incarnation—of poetry. Erotic love is the ecstatic moment in which man communicates with his original nature, with his lost self, alienated from him by the drudgery of everyday life and the repression imposed by his heritage. Like in poetry-making, eros extends a bridge to the other and, through it, man achieves fulfillment and transcendence. Love can transcend, continues this poetic vision, only if it liberates, to the point of transgression and illicitness. In "Piedra de sol" 'Sun Stone,' which is one of the most spectacular poems of *Estasción violenta*, romantic mysticism and surrealist erotic revolution combine to give us the whole range of this liberating love. However, at this point of confluence of surrealism and mysticism, eros overflows the crystalline boundaries of allegory and manages to infuse the metaphysical skeleton with considerable flesh and blood. Indeed, this "surplus" rivals the eroticism of the major contemporary Hispanic poets, like Vicente Aleixandre or Pablo Neruda, who were also "liberated" by surrealism.

It will be interesting to observe how both emplotments will change and, especially, how the poetic discourse itself will begin to explore the possibilities obscurely plotted by the latter: how a metaphoric ploy will become a dynamic force shaping the very letter, the very textuality of Pazian discourse. One of the seminal passages of *Arco* will set us on the track to start following that change:

> ... in the amorous act consciousness is like the wave that, after overcoming the obstacle, before breaking rises to a crest in which everything-form and movement, upward thrust and force of gravity-achieves a balance without support, sustained by itself. Quietude of movement. And just as we glimpse a fuller life, more life than life, through a beloved body, we discern the fixed beam of poetry through the poem. That instant contains every instant. Without ceasing to flow, time stops, overflowing itself. (14)

This formulation is well worth underscoring as a kind of paradigm that will help us to highlight the subsequent changes. The resolution given here to the quest for the reunion with the other—suspension of the flux of things by the poetic and erotic ecstasies—is distinctly mystical and Schopenhauerian. This seems to be the earliest layer of mythologies framing Pazian philosophy of modern poetry, and corresponds to the "season" of "Poesía de soledad y poesía de communion" 'Poetry of Solitude and Poetry of Communion' of the forties (*Peras* 117-31). In other parts of *Arco*, especially in its version from 1967 which

spans the fifties and sixties,[4] and in his subsequent major critical contributions, this resolution is fulfilled by different philosophical concepts. A kind of "vertical," paradigmatic reading of Paz's critical work—similar to the Proppian approach to the corpus of Russian fairy tales—uncovers, provisionally, the following framing myths that supersede one another: the Heideggerian trinity of Poetry, Language, and Being (*Arco*); the ahistorical, near Platonic structures fathered by Claude Lévi-Strauss (the eponymous book); the empty plenitude of Buddhist *nirvana* (*Conjunciones*); and the vacuousness and dispersion of textual meaning preached by the post-structuralist semiology of Derrida (*Mono gram tico*). This shifting fulfillment of the quest keeps pace remarkably with Western intellectual developments as they swept through Europe from the forties to the early seventies; even the biography of the poet—his long diplomatic service in India in the sixties—coincides with the new upsurge of Western fascination with the East.

On the other hand, all these elements together sustain still another frame of Pazian thinking: his prophetic critique of the modern Western concept of History—of History as a lineal, teleological path of Progress and Perfection—as envisioned by Enlightened Reason.[5] Unlike many of his Spanish-American contemporaries, he does not stop at the comfortable criticism of the "bourgeois heritage" and the evils of capitalism, nor does he refrain from calling into question the sacred superstition of our times, the "scientific" Marxism—also an off-shoot of the Enlightenment. What is so interesting and radical about him is that he goes on to question the very "roots" of Western tradition. Criticism, of course, at least implicitly, calls for other options. In Paz, the "West side" story will be checked and balanced by the "East side." We will turn to it in more detail shortly. Beneath Pazian work, there lies yet another quest by Western man: a search for alternatives to the burden of his own tradition. The poet finds them in poetry, in love, in the rebellion of the body, in the dissolution of time, and the East will add some spice of its own, too.

All this may not supply nor replace a strong philosophy, but this intellectual and poetic vision certainly is a powerful *mythopoeia*, a necessary springboard towards any poetic and critical creation. Even the plight of contemporary philosophy, her Sisyphean task of demolishing the structures and traces left behind by mythology and by ideology in our social ritual and discourse, cannot fail to be transformed into such a *mythopoeia*, although negative and seemingly enjoying its "nihilism." Pazian critique of Western modernity and his poetic quest for alternatives not only creates the third emplotment of his universe, which will be fraught with as many myths and metaphors as the other ones, but it actually turns him into the most typical Western man.

The ecstatic moment of love, "the time fulfilled in itself" (*Arco* 14; our trans.), also harbors an implicit denial of Time and of History. The momentary arresting of the metaphysical "will to life," invented for aesthetic purposes by Schopenhauer, is turned against their modern ideations. Violent shifts of time and space in "El himno entre ruinas" 'Hymn Among Ruins' and the cyclical universe of "Piedra de sol" reflect this criticism.

The poetic philosophy or philosophical poetics of love will be radically questioned in the sixties.

II

Paz took full advantage of the possibilities that opened up to him in the early sixties, those delayed "happy years" after all sorts of wars and before others could break out with full force again. First came his close encounter with the East during the time, between 1962 and 1968 that he served as the Mexican ambassador to India.[6] He was not the only major Spanish-American writer to be exposed directly to the East. One would have to name at least one other Mexican, José Juan Tablada, as well as Pablo Neruda, the Ecuatorian Jorge Carrera Andrade or the Cuban Severo Sarduy; it would be a fascinating study to compare their experiences (see Durán for some hints). But, among all of them, he penetrated deepest into the web of Oriental thought and integrated it most intimately into his own literary and critical project. Even so, one can only wonder about the depth of his understanding. For example, *Conjunciones y disyunciones* (1969; Conjunctions and Disjunctions), which is the critical counterpart to the poems of *Ladera Este* (1969; East Side), is both dazzling and puzzling. It is even more so if we consider that, as Said or Todorov have shown, the Western "dialogue" with the "other" has not been precisely a history of success. *Conjunciones* displays erudition quite uncommon for a Western intellectual; but it also baffles one because all that knowledge and all the bridges opened toward the East follow the neat-all too neat-structuralist matrices of symmetries and inversions introduced by Lívi-Strauss.

One is tempted to paraphrase Borges and ask, if it is doubtful that history makes any sense, is it not even more so to have it draw, in the East and in the West, these rigorous calligraphic patterns? It might appear that the critic of the Western *telos* has been caught in another teleological trap. We could go one step further and question not only the methods of organizing that knowledge but the very attitude towards the East that transpires through *Conjunciones*. For example, to what degree does Paz succumb to the so-called "Eurocentrism"? Guided by his "natural" sense of centrality, Western man has imposed his views and disseminated his visions all around the globe. But there were differences: while in the New World his fantasy blended with Utopia, in the East, in the luxurious and sensual East, he deposited his libidinous dreams, his desire for individual fulfillment, and, later, his search for values that might bolster his own faltering tradition. This seems to be exactly what the poet is seeking and what he finds on the East side. As he himself lucidly says elsewhere, "It would be a mistake to believe that we are looking to Buddhism for a truth that is foreign to our tradition; what we are seeking is a confirmation of a truth we already know" (*Corriente* 102).

Whatever the value of the bridges that Paz engineered between East and West, the East influenced some of the key elements of his *mythopoeia*. Buddhist pantheism and Tantrist eroticism left the deepest imprint upon him. Buddhism subverted the concept of transcendence, of the "other shore": romantic mysticism had to yield to the empty plenitude and to the transcendence-in-the-presence of *nirvana*. Tantrism, in its turn, stressed in Paz the cosmic and violent dimension of erotic love; in this tradition, he found the surrealist subconscious and the experiments of Marquis de Sade elevated to and socialized by ritual.

The sixties were also the hey-day of the structuralist, semiological, and linguistic carnival which focused anew on social communication, on its codes, and on the semiotics of its messages. Paz was especially attracted to the work of Lïvi-Strauss. He was fascinated by the latter's formulation of the latent structures of myths in terms of binary oppositions permitting him to put in order—perhaps all too rigorous—the storehouse of world mythologies, and welcomed the concept of structures (in French structuralism equivalent to codes) that seemed to defy, encompass, and annihilate History. In the volume dedicated to the French ethnologist, Buddhism surprisingly appears as a version of and as a complement to this structuralism, and *vice versa*. Through the fragile bridge built by the poet, they converge as critiques of the modern Western concept of History as Progress and, supposedly abolish its very possibility. Here the poetic mythology becomes ritual exorcism. Of course, this plot is too neat—too "Classical"—to effectively model any referential, historical reality—whatever semiotic or ideological values we may ascribe to this concept—especially when both Buddhism and structuralism are accepted for their face value, without any criticism.[7]

The East thus turns into the fourth emplotment of the Pazian *mythopoeia*. It is the mirror image of the West in the sense that it supplements the deficiencies of the latter and ends up as the allegorical incarnation of alternatives sought by Paz, typically, outside and yet within his own tradition. It is even "read" through the eyes of surrealism and of structuralism. But, similar to the relation of *eros* and mysticism, the East overflows this allegory; its flesh and spice give a special touch to the fragile plots and, together with the structuralist connection, also furnish them with attractive makeup. All these allegorical, mythical, and modish frames and frame-ups that we have been joyfully excavating from the plot of his developing literary and critical project, should not mislead us; it is both with them and yet in spite of them—thanks to the overflowing of metaphysical emplotments and exorcistic drives—that Paz becomes a genuinely interesting and original thinker, not only of Mexican and Hispanic culture and tradition, but of contemporary Western culture at large.

III

Structuralism had yet more impulses in store for the Pazian literary enterprise. It is instructive to recall that in all its phases—from Russian Formalism to the present—structuralism has always been related to the successive faces of the avant-garde. For example, Formalism was stimulated by the futurism of Mayakovski and Khlebnikov (Pomorska); the Prague school was more "academic," but still entertained a close dialogue with the Czech avant-garde of the late twenties and thirties; or, among the French structuralists, the semiologists around Barthes helped to lay the ground rules for some neoavant-gardist experimentation of the "nouveauroman" in the sixties; in France this collaboration led its participants into "post-structuralism." The other side of the coin is that the antimimetic ideology of avant-garde—as we show in our *Metaestructuralismo*

(85-92)—has molded in its own image even the alleged scientific projects of structuralist aesthetics, poetics, and semiotics. Indeed, it might now seem that, in "deconstruction," the expanding waves of the avant-garde have finally reached philosophy and have turned its discourse into one of the avant-garde's playful antimimetic literary genres. The *aporia* of "antimimetic metadiscourse," embraced by "deconstructive" criticism, has been both its driving and undermining force.

The neoavant-gardist experimentation and the structuralist and post-structuralist semiology set "in rotation" Pazian poetic and critical discourse. The manifesto "Signos en rotacion" 'Signs in Rotation,' published in 1965 and then added—as an "epilogue"—to the second edition of *Arco*, in 1967, conceptualizes this new face of his literary universe. In spite of quite an extensive rewriting of *Arco*, "Signos" does not blend with it easily (see also Santí), but is, so to speak, grafted on it. This concept of 'grafting' leads us to Derrida, who has shown how the "logic of the supplement" plays havoc with the assumed closure and unity of the "principal" text (144-45). On the one hand, the epilogue of Arco seems only to radicalize some of the earlier concepts and obsessions of Paz, for example, his modern preoccupation with "silence" as a part of poetic discourse;[8] on the other hand, it not only reopens the earlier conceptual framework and reveals it to be lacking, but it actually explodes it.

According to our "archeology," semiological experiment creates the fifth emplotment of the developing Pazian *mythopoeia*. In this new framework, the word defies the traditional assumptions that "'language' has no exterior because it is not in space" (Lyotard 17), and becomes incarnate. The discourse attempts to empty its referential dimension and focuses more on itself. Instead of the "world," "feelings," "topics," or "transparent meanings," it highlights its own structure and material qualities. It stops being an allegory of the world and becomes a brave new playground of semiosis.[9] Unfortunately, as has already been said, this semiosis is firmly embedded in/with the ideology of the avant-garde which has followed the Kantian siren or Mallarméan advice, "Exclus-en .../Le réel parce que vil" 'Cut the real out /... for it is cheap' (182-83). In *Le Plaisir du texte* (1973; The *Pleasure of the Text*), Barthes ponders the *aporias* of this concept of discourse (50-53) and comes to the sad conclusion that it is not at all easy to exorcise the "world," the "outside"; "some" of it is even necessary because, otherwise, the text would be sterile. At least he inverts the terms: now it is the letter that views the world as its shadow (53). Just how this "shadow" should penetrate the virginal closure of the neoavant-gardist text remains the mystery of Barthesian *jouissance*.[10]

The sixties play havoc with Pazian *mythopoeia*: while he plots the East side of his story of the West, his semiological attachment explodes these emplotments. However, similar to the surrealist season which shattered "pure poetry" and yet continued to be influenced by it, the debris of these emplotments flows in and overflows the semiological experiment, becoming that "something" needed for its fruitful, productive play.

The critical reflection in "Signos" turns on the famous Mallarmīan poem "Un Coup de dīs" 'A Dice Throw' (1897), and shows through its example how the "semiological mode," initiated *avant la lettre* by the French symbolist poet, has changed literary space and poetic language. Once again, without any visible anxiety, Paz faithfully misreads his subject, looking as he is for a confirmation of his latest poetic vision. Thus, the semiological conceptualization of "Un Coup" is faithful, but the ideology behind it, with all of its idealistic and somewhat esoteric metaphysics of "negativity," is completely disregarded:

> Space has lost, as it were, its passivity: it is not that which contains things but rather, in perpetual movement, it alters their course and intervenes actively in their transformations. It is the agent of mutations, it is energy. ... The change affects the page and the structure.
>
> ... Between the page and the writing is established a relation, new in the West and traditional in Far Eastern and Arabic poetry, which consists in their mutual interpretation. Space becomes writing: the blank spaces (which represent silence, and perhaps for that very reason) say something that signs do not say. ...The poet makes word of everything he touches, not excluding silence and the blanks in the text. (*Arco* 258-60)

In other words, modern poetry has transformed the typographic page into a kind of Einsteinian "timespace." The page has stopped being a mere simulacrum of virtual space, used—as if from outside—for conventional recording of speech that, as Lyotard or Wellek and Warren point out, "must be conceived as existing elsewhere" (*Theory* 142), and has no longer been left to chance, mitigated only by aesthetic touch-ups. Now it has become a concrete, protean, part of the new poetic semiosis, of the new, translinguistic poetic discourse.

In one of the games played in this broader playground, verbal test acquires the quality of pictorial sign: it symbolizes visually what it means verbally. Its limits are painting and pictographic or ideographic writing. Some of Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*—like "Paysage" 'Landscape,' "Lettre-Ocīan" 'Ocean-Letter,' "Il Pleut" 'It's Raining, to name just a few—exploit its mimetic potential. A host of cubo-futurists together with such master-poets as Pound, Cummings, Williams or the Chilean Huidobro, follow this path.[11]

In another game, it is the blank space that is, so to speak, drawn into the text; it becomes a special sign among verbal signs and acquires both its signifying form and meaning from their formal and semantic sonstellation.[12] "Un Coup de dés" sets out to explore the potential of this more abstract type. Some more involved examples of this game rely heavily on elaborate commentaries (in the case of Mallarmé, the preface to this poem and other "variations on a subject" serve this need). Barthes' differentiation between *representation* and *figuration* (*Plaisir* 88-90) may help us to better understand this second type. The abstract visual use of space does not put before our eyes specific objects

created or recreated after "reality;" in contrast, it only plays with diverse figurative values of visual constellations. Abstract painting or collage come to mind first. The ornamental use of writing in Islamic architecture is another example. However, the effects are not only pictorial or sculptural. Thus, typographic "blow up" can influence the very literary semiotics of the text, and the "larger" volume experienced by the reader may enable it to make larger claims—i.e., a poem may appear as a book, or a short story may sell as a novel.[13] Another case of the abstract figuration is that of the plurality of consciousness and of language—i.e., of the paradigms of the language code-which Blanchot glimpsed in the "new concept of literary space" of "Un Coup" (*Siren* 237-42).[14] Or Pazian *Blanco* (1967; *Blanco*) splendidly incarnates yet another figuration, that of Barthes' own understanding of this concept as "the way in which the erotic body appears ... in the profile of the text ... cleft into fetish objects, into erotic sites" (*Plaisir* 88-89; our adapt.). Among Paz's more experimental exercises, *Topoemas* (1968; *Topoemas*) belong to the mimetic type; *Discos visuales* (1968; Visual Discs), to the abstract type. Yet, at the same time, the first edition of *Blanco*, *Topoemas*, and *Discos* all play with different values conferred upon them by the typographic "blow up."

Modern poetry most frequently uses both games simultaneously in order to generate an infinite variety of poetic "topograms." Some may show only a light trace of this new concept of literary space; others are more elaborate. But it would seem wrong to dismiss this whole poetic mode as though it were merely some "rare extra-vaganza" or "a fascinating historical curiosity"—which are the characterizations that can be found, for example, in such discriminate authorities as Wellek and Warren (144) or Frank (13-14). It is also amusing to observe—even within the limited scope of our study—the contradictory moves of modern literature: how it exposes and subverts the forgery of traditional mimesis, especially that of the "realistic" art of the last century—and yet how this alleged "antimimetic" art explores and forges other possibilities of imitation by words; how it questions and breaks up language, meaning, reference, and communication—and, nevertheless, how it goes on to uncover new dimensions of verbal and topogrammatic semiosis.

If we now return to the critical vision of "Un Coup" by Paz, we note still another aspect: as he attempts to explain the significance of the Mallarméan experiment, he catches the first glimpse of the post-structuralist semiology in the making. On the other hand, this shows us how closely this semiology is related to the avant-garde experiments and ideology:

> There is no final interpretation for *Un Coup de dés* because its last word is not a final word. ... at the end of the journey the poet does not contemplate the idea, symbol or archetype, but a space in which a constellation appears: his poem. It is not an image or an essence; it is an account being calculated, a handful of signs that are drawn, effaced, and drawn again. Thus, this poem that denies the possibility of saying

something absolute ... is ... the plenary affirmation of the sovereignty of the word. (*Arco* 252)

This semiological and *mythopoeic* criticism of meaning (the simultaneous nullity and sovereignty of the word), will reach its highest stage in a later experimental text, *El mono gramático* (1972; *The Monkey Grammarian*).

IV

The poems from the volume *Ladera Este*, which highlights through its title the East as the "other side" of the West, play with all these new poetic myths and artistic devices. However, here the Pazian literary quest opens some unexpected ground. The semiological dynamization of literary space, pointed out in his reflection on Mallarmī, turns out to be only a way-station towards a more audacious goal. In "Carta a Leon Felipe" 'Letter to Leon Felipe' which is a kind of poetic, poematic manifesto, we read:

La escritura poïtica es
Aprender a leer
El hueco de la escritura
En la escritura
.....
La poesía
Es la ruptura instantánea
Instantáneamente cicatrizada
Abierta de nuevo
Por la mirada de los otros
.....
La poesía
Es la hendidura
El espacio
Entre una palabra y otra
Configuracion del inacabamiento
(91-92)

To write poetry
Is learning to read
The hole of writing
In the writing
.....
Poetry
Is the instant rupture
Instantly healed
Reopened
By the vision of the others
.....

Poetry
Is the cleft
The space
Between one word and another
Configuration of the unending
(131-33; our adapt.)

"La poesía / Es la hendidura" 'Poetry / Is the cleft:' 'hendidura' (cleft, crack, fissure, rift, split) is undoubtedly the key concept of this passage. But what is it? What does it stand for? The poem "Vrindaban" (the title comes from one of the holy cities of Hinduism) gives us the first hint:

Tal vez en una piedra hendida
Palpo la forma femenina
Y su desgarradura (61)
Perhaps in a cleft stone
He touched the feminine form
And its rift
(147; our adapt.)

The author's footnote to this place is more explicit: "certain stones are signs of the great goddess, especially if their form alludes to the sexual cleft (*yoni*)" (178; our trans.). Like Goya playing games with his gorgeous *maja*—now dressed, now not—, *Conjunciones* removes the last, albeit transparent, metaphorical veil of *maya* from 'hendidura' as 'yoni.' Describing the Tantric mandala of the human body,[15] Paz writes: "The two veins start at the sacred plexus, in which the penis (*linga*) and the vulva (*yoni*) are located" (76). In his inaugural lecture as a member of El Colegio Nacional de México (Mexican Academy of the Arts), entitled "La nueva analogía" 'New Analogy,' from 1967, he calls Hindu temples "a sexual vegetation in stone, the copula of the elements, the dialogue between *lingam* and yoni" (*Signo* 13; our trans.). 'Hendidura' 'Cleft' thus comes to symbolize, through the metaphor of vulva, one of the key sacred centers (*cakras*) of the Tantric mandala of the human body.

Another text from the same period, "La semilla" 'The Seed,' relates the erotic concept of 'hendidura' to the earlier metaphysical and critical concerns of the poet:

> ... human time will then appear to be a divided present. Separation, a sharp break [*ruptura*]: *now* falls into *before* and *after*. This fissure [*hendidura*] in time announces the advent of the kingdom of man... As man's history unfolds, the fissure becomes broader and broader... But primitive man is a creature who is less defenseless spiritually than we are. The moment the seed falls into a crack, it fills it and swells with life. Its fall is a resurrection: the gash [*desgarradura*] is a scar; and separation is reunion. (*Corriente* 23-24)

This visionary text, roaming freely through art, time, history, and myth, sheds new light on one of the quoted passages from "Carta a Leon Felipe."

However, beyond the sexual metaphor of 'hendidura' and its esoteric and mystical symbolism, what is actually new in the Pazian erotic concept of poetry of the sixties? It is the fact that the former romantic mysticism establishes a surprising bridgehead on typographic page: now, the blank page and the blank space between words open up into a kind of erotic cleft and dialogue. In "Carta a Leon Felipe," 'hendidura'—identified with poetry—is transformed, figuratively, into an image and a powerful symbol of the new literary space.[16]

In *Ladera*, 'hendidura' fuses a double heritage into a striking whole. In the first place, it assumes the image contexts developed earlier around 'herida' 'wound' and its synonyms. For example, in the last sequel of "Diario de un soñador" 'Diary of a Dreamer,' from 1945, the young poet raves: "You are ... like a wound from which I drink the lost substance of creation, an imprevisible revelation..." (147; our trans.). The desired woman, compared to a wound, becomes a symbol of transcendence. At the end of his first surrealist text, "Trabajos del poeta" 'The Poet's Works,' the wound is identified with the woman's sexual organ and the orgasmic moment becomes a symbol of poetic expression; both love and poetry resound with cosmic projection: "...pico que desgarra y entreabre al fin el fruto!, tú, mi Grito, surtidor de plumas de fuego, herida resonante y vasta como el desprendimiento de un planeta del cuerpo de una estrella" 'beak that tears and at last cracks open the fruit! You my cry, fountain of feathers of fire, wound resounding and vast like the ripping out of a planet from the body of a star' (*Aguila* 26-27). "Mutra," from *Estación violenta*, adds a telluric dimension through the metamorphosis of the split stone into a vulva. "Entrada en material" 'Entrance Into Matter,' from *Salamandra* (1962; Salamander), powerfully sums up all the pieces of this strand, and introduces 'hendidura' as an equivalent of 'herida:'

Ciudad

.....
Un reflector palpa tus plazas más secretas
El sagrario del cuerpo
El arca del espíritu
Los labios de la herida la herida de los labios
La boscosa hendidura de la profecía
.....
Y la juntura ciega de la piedra
Entre tus muslos ...

(9-10)

City

.....

A searchlight touches your most secret sites
The sacred place of the body
Ark of the sprit
Labia of the wound wound of the labia
Wooded cleft of the prophecy
.....
Blind junction of the stone
Between your thighs ...

(Our trans.)

In turn, *Ladera* raises these images to a higher power by giving them, through the meeting with the East, a distinct symbolic closure (cleft stone/vulva as a symbol of the Great Goddess; the key center of the Tantric mandala of human body; Buddhist sculpture, *linga*, and *yoni* as indexes of Buddhist culture, philosophy, and values). The emplotment of the image complex built around 'hendidura' in the Pazian work of the sixties becomes manifest in yet another way. Using the framework developed by Lévi-Strauss for the study of world mythologies, we can formulate the myth underlying this complex as follows:

Together, "feminine cleft" and "eros" mediate between Nature (the given, *fatum*) and Culture (the creation of man; freedom, although restrained here by "transcendence"). Through this mediation and closure, the myth also becomes mythos: a story, a tight plot.

But let us not repeat the mistake of structuralism-which was to become too absorbed by symmetries, binary oppositions, and inversions to notice all the multifarious realities overflowing its strait, all too straight, generative *logos*—and see in the mythic schema what it is not. It is not some latent, immutable mold of meaning that would, magically, hold in check the play of Pazian discourse and the metamorphoses of his *mythopoeia*. This mythic scheme is just one powerful and felicitous formulation of one facet of that play and of one moment of that flow. If we go back to the earlier stages, the terms change ('hendidura'/ 'herida') or disappear (cleft stone); if we go forward, poetry radically invades space and becomes material object, almost a part of Nature, and transcendence itself is challenged by Buddhism and changes its content. The East, paradoxically, grounds, enriches, and subverts different elements of the myth. Semiology, in turn, will explode it, but will retain its "shadow" as enrichment of its own game.

In this way, the context of *Ladera*—and, more broadly, the whole Pazian work—fulfills the Mallarméan vision of poetic discourse postulating, in the summary of Paz himself, "an ideal writing in which the phrases and words would reflect each other and, in some measure, contemplate or read one another" (*Arco* 251). Love and eros, once elements of the

metaphysical *mythopoeia* or poetic themes, invade the typographic page and are dramatized, figuratively, in and through this new literary space. Literary discourse—the semiotic dialogue or writing, print, and space—acquires a body; and it is an erotic one.

V

The erotization of literary space in Paz affects his very concept of poetry. The quest for transcendence, that characterized the earlier phase of his *mythopoeia* and is still fully present in the second edition of *Arco*, is now *textualized*. Transcendence is no longer a kind of meaning, reality or substance beyond the text: it becomes one of the shadows cast by the latter—figured by the letter—within the reading-spectacle. In this, the ideology of the avant-gardist text blends with and is reinforced by the interpretation given to the *aporia* of "immanent transcendence" by Tantrism: "Everything is real in Tantrism—and everything is symbolic. Phenomenical reality is more than the symbol of the other reality: we touch symbols when we think we are touching bodies and material objects, and vice versa" (*Conjunciones* 68-69).

The long experimental poem *Blanco*, with its even visual textual labyrinths and erotic sites, powerfully develops this new concept of poetic space and of poetry itself. *Blanco* is a visionary poem and a visual play, a poetic speculation on love, language, reality and unreality of the world, all transposed into the textual metamorphoses on/of the page.[17] Among the types of erotic figuration of space pointed out in this study, it is the closest to the Barthesian concept of erotic figuration. As already in Tantrism, "scripture is *lived* as a body that is an analogue of the physical body—and the body is *read* as a scripture" (*Conjunciones* 79). Once again, the light come to Paz from the East and makes it possible for him to anticipate movement in the West.

In *Blanco*, according to the poet's introduction, "the space flows, engendering and dissipating the text" (*Ladera* 145).[18] Woman's body is transformed metaphorically into writing and writing plays with the figurative values of spatial erotic body. The textualized meaning and "transcendence," arising and vanishing in the act of reading, "make real the vision" only in the instant of contemplation. Poetic text becomes a correlate of the paradoxical plenitude and emptiness of *nirvana*. Tantric Buddhism, ideology of the avant-garde, and post-structuralist semiology all blend into a dazzling *bricolage*; in *Mono gramático*, Paz has formulated it in the following way:

> ... the path of poetic writing leads to the abolition of writing: at the end of it we are confronted with an inexpressible reality. ... As I write, I journey toward meaning: as I read what I write, I blot it out, I dissolve the path. Each attempt I make ends up the same way: the dissolution of the text in the reading of it, the expulsion of the meaning through writing. ... the vision that poetic writing offers us is that of its dissolution. Poetry is empty, like the clearing in the forest... it is nothing but the *place* of the apparition which is, at the same time, that of its disappearance. (132-34)

When we read this, we can almost hear through it an echo of the earlier quoted passage from "Signos en rotación" (*Arco* 252). The theory developed there around "Un Coup de dés" is transposed here into a distinctly poetic and prophetic discourse, which is an integral part of a long experimental poem in prose. In *Mono gramático*, the theoretical strand becomes an incarnation of the agonizing self-consciousness of the modern literary text reaching, as it assumes, in vain, for any kind of saving transcendence in/from the outside.[19]

Various claims of this visionary semiology of *nirvāṇa* call for a closer scrutiny. Let us point to at least some of the issues involved. For example, if we take the quoted assertion in its broadest sense, it holds true of any text: all texts "flow," appear and disappear, before the reader's eyes, and no reading—unless by some magic—can transform the vision into a material world, only into another text. The difference between the traditional and the avant-gardist works lies, then, in how they use the media of transmission and by what *mythopoeia* they motivate that use. Beyond that, both the *mythopoeia* of the 19th century "realism" and that of the 20th century "avant-garde" are but two ideological forgeries—to a great degree symmetrical and inverse—which are "authenticated" only by the models and the molds they have forged to their image. In the beginning, it was useful for criticism to follow the avant-garde because its experimental character made it easier to rock the boat of traditional poetics; but, in the end, the privilege of one over the other is misleading because the "scientific" projects of contemporary poetics have become so irreparably entangled in the very ideological web of the avant-garde. Criticism cannot exist but in constant struggle with and as erosion of the entrapments of ideologies and of myths.

On the other hand, if these Pazian claims should represent a specific theory of textual meaning and of reading, present-day poetics would have to reject the metaphor of *nirvana* as another myth and mystification. For example, the text is a complex semiotic inscription: it is already filled with signs, verbal and non-verbal, alphabetic and non-alphabetic, coming in a certain order or configuration (this is, after all, what makes possible decipherment of unknown or coded scripts). The blank space itself is culturally—i.e., semiotically—conditioned: blank page or canvas are not "empty" but are "oriented"—"read"—differently in the West and in the East. Therefore, contrary to Barthes (*Critique* 57) and post-structuralists, the sense of a text is never empty; it is, so to speak, *preemptied* in a certain way. Neither does the reading come close to the absoluteness, closure, and introvertedness of *nirvāṇa*. Rather, supplementing the text by social norms, values, conventions, and by the intertextual ties highlighted by its times, reading closes but temporarily and tentatively its horizon of meaning, and always leaves the door open for future readings and supplements.[20] The concept of "empty sense" can be salvaged only as a vague expression of the fact that there is no fixed, absolute meaning behind the text, guaranteed by some Guardian Angel. What is important to note is that the realization of this lack of transcendence,[21] which slowly worked its way from philosophy to hermeneutics,

was cheerfully embraced by the avant-garde and was put to use through its will-known concept of art as "intranscendent playing."

Those poets!, swearing on intranscendence, conjuring emptiness, and promising silence; and yet they continue to obscurely plot new works, new challenges, and new glorious shipwrecks in their—declared and undeclared—war on the absolute, that ever receding ritual horizon before the avant-garde literature. In the end, all this purported nihilism seems to be but a defamiliarizing—polarizing and agonizing—*ploy* of their literary game: of their ultimate quest for a new transcendence in and through artistic creation.

In the case of Paz, this struggle gives rise to yet another dazzling and puzzling literary and critical universe, comparable only to the most radical projects born out of the Spanish-American avant-garde, such as those of Vicente Huidobro, César Vallejo, Pablo Neruda or Jorge Luis Borges.[22]

Notes

[1] *Contemporáneos* (1928-1931; Contemporaries) emerged as one of the principal literary journals of the Mexican avant-garde.

[2] So far, Wilson's is the best account of the Pazian surrealist connection, although some of his information concerning the reception of surrealism in Mexico needs to be corrected; see, e.g., the special issue of *Artes Visuales* entitled *Surrealismo en México* (1974; Surrealism in Mexico).

[3] Paz understands the concept the concept of literary modernity rather traditionally, as spanning the period roughly from romanticism to the end of the "historical" avant-garde of the twenties. In this way, he tacitly identifies *literary* modernity with the strand of our *historical* modernity extending from the Enlightenment. This is probably one of the intrinsic reasons why he has recently joined the clamor for the "end of modernity"—modernity reduced, for the convenience of its "postmodern" critics, to one of its threads—and why his criticism of this "Western modernity" has become more and more apocalyptic and exorcistic (*Hijos, Signo*). For a different approach see our *Cuatro claves* (9-17).

[4] The second edition of *Arco* attempts to bridge the gap between this mystical vision and the technical and ideological input of French structuralism of the sixties. The two versions of *Arco* were aptly compared by Rodríguez Monegal. Rewriting—the overt and covert updating and "polishing"—of his texts is an obsession in Paz, and a possible nightmare for his critics (see Santí for some incisive remarks in this regard).

[5] Goya, who saw considerable Napoleonic "progress" in his time, used an ambiguous phrase as a part of and also as a title for his engraving "The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters" (from *Caprichos*). Did he actually foresee that both the absence and the presence of *logos* produce monsters, only different kinds of them? Borges would say that our choice is purely aesthetic. On the other hand, Jung might remark that this invention of Enlightenment fits remarkably well into the Western pattern of extrovert tradition characterized by the need of Salvation from the outside: Utopia, Jesus, Progress, light from the East, the Red Army—all the armies of the night of salvation.

[6] He resigned that post after the October 2 Tlatelolco massacre and broke with the Government of PRI—the Institutional Revolutionary Party—and with its mask of "institutionalized" revolution.

[7] In Western tradition, this kind of closure has occupied a pivotal position. According to Aristotle, through the closure of *mythos* (plot), dramatic art does not merely imitate the appearance but captures the "essence" of things; hence, it is more "philosophical," "universal," and "valuable" than,

e.g., historiography, factography, or science, as far as they are able to resist the irresistible temptation of some totalizing ideology. Logocentrism here turns Aristotelian *mythos* into a myth (see our *Metaestructuralismo* 161-82). In Western tradition, myth and *mythos* are inextricably intertwined.

[8] See the subtle reading of this strand in Paz by Alazraki.

[9] Our *Metaestructuralismo* (68-71, 238-39, 251-54) charts the avant-garde background as well as some semiotic presuppositions of this process.

[10] 'Sensual pleasure, enjoyment.' The English translation uses alternately 'pleasure' and 'bliss.' The ideology of the neoavant-gardist 'text' is summed up by Barthes in his post-structuralist manifesto "From Work to Text," written in 1971.

[11] The semiotic play highlighted in the so-called "concrete poetry," which emerged from all these experiments in the 1950s, is even more complex and, in some cases, it abandons verbal discourse to turn into semiotics or painting *tout court* (for a perspicacious account see Steiner 197-218).

[12] The "empty" space, the typographic "silence," has a value of "zero sign." According to Jakobson, this is a special kind of sign which signifies precisely through the absence of the usual or expected "full" signs or as a "zero" part of the economy of some paradigms. "Zero sign" is thus a kind of "maverick" sign: it is "in" by being "out;" but it also is a "joker" sign because it fills the gaps of the system as the player needs it. E.g., in Sternian jokes, a "zero discourse" is pitted against the expectations raised in the reader and derives its significance, in each case, from its particular "environment" created by "full" discourse. "Zero sign" is one of those little "tricksters" that "lay bare" and explode the whole industry of "semiotic" trivia which flooded the academic market-place in the wake of the structuralist "revolution."

[13] E.g., since fewer language elements fill the slots of lines and pages, their "weight" and "visibility" are enhanced; attention is drawn to more of their significant details (somewhat like the well known Jakobsonian microscopic analyses of poetic texts); this slows down the tempo and forces us to put greater effort into the reading; etc.

[14] One could add to this interior polyphony yet another plural dimension, that of the dialogic polyphony of discourse, studied by Bakhtin, which is also reflected in the constellation of Mallarmé's poem.

[15] This picture is missing in the English edition.

[16] Other poems from *Ladera*, like "El día en Udaipur" 'The Day in Udaipur' or "Custodia"'Monstrance,' would lead us further in our search for other possible textual veils and unveils of 'hendidura.' The limits imposed on our study by the readers' endurance force us to forgo this path here.

[17] See Ortega for one of the best commentaries on this involved poem.

[18] Omitted from *Configurations*.

[19] See Alazraki for an incisive commentary on this text.

[20] This point is made by the contemporary "reader-oriented" criticism.

[21] 'Leere Transzendenz/leere Idealitat' 'empty transcendence/ideality' are the key concepts advanced as characteristics of literature from romanticism to present by Friedrich (*passim*).

[22] We would like to thank Prof. Maureen Ahern and Miss Eileen Mahoney for their generous and repeated help with the English version of this study; and the former for the thorough discussion of our translations and adaptations.

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Reorienting Genre Division in Sanskrit Poetics*

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Sanskrit poetics classifies literary works of art under two major heads *śravyakāvya* or poetry and *dṛśyakāvya* or drama. *Śravyakāvya* is further classified under the heads as *padyamayakāvya* or verse-poetry, *gadyamayakāvya* or prose-poetry and *campūkāvya* or poetry in both prose and verse. Verses are of five types such as *muktaka, yugmaka, sandānitaka, kalāpaka* and *kulaka*, and verse-poetry is subclassified as *mahākāvya* (epic), *khaṇḍakāvya* (lyric) and *koṣakāvya* (lexicon). Prose-poetry is of four types: *muktaka, vṛttagandhī, utkalikāprāya* and *curṇaka*. It is also classified another way into *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā*. *Campūkāvya* as a eulogy of a king is known as *viruda* and when it comprises various languages it is called *karambhaka*.[1]

Agnīpurāṇa presents a five-fold classification of the prose *kāvya* namely *ākhyāyikā, kathā, khaṇḍakathā, parikathā* and *kathānikā*.[2] Excluding *ākhyāyikā* the other four categories differ slightly from each other and may be counted under the *membric kathā*. Many Sanskrit critics have noted the points of difference between these two species, *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā*. According to Bhāmaha (c.7th century A.D.) the earliest rhetorician, *ākhyāyikā* is a kind of literary work composed in prose, which employs words pleasing to the ear and suitable to the matter intended. It deals with an elevated subject-matter and the sections of the narratives are called *ucchvāśas*. Here the hero himself gives an account of his exploits. In it the verses in *vaktra* and *aparavaktra* metres intimate future events on befitting occasions and the poet is free to offer imaginary events and situations. It describes the kidnapping of a maiden, a battle, separation of lovers and the final triumph of the hero. But the *kathā* does not contain verses in *vaktra* and *aparavaktra* metres and its divisions are not called *ucchvāśas*. It may be composed either in Sanskrit or in *Apabhraṁśa*. An account of the deeds of the hero is given by somebody other than the hero himself as it would be discourteous on the part of the hero to boast of his won merits.[3] Daṇḍin (8th century A.D.) criticizes Bhāmaha and argues that *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* are only two divisions of prose *kāvya*. *Ākhyāyikā* is a recounting by the hero himself and the other (the *kathā*) by the hero or by someone else. As the hero represents reality the faithful description of his own heroic deeds should not be considered discourteous. But this rule is not universal as persons other than the hero also are narrators in *ākhyāyikā*. Therefore the narrative point of view (in the first or third person) should not be considered a criterion. Similarly the use of particular metres (*vaktra* or *aparavaktra*) and the titling of the chapters as *ucchvāśas*

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should not also be considered differentia of an *ākhyāyikā* as they may also be used in case of *kathā*. Daṇḍin approves of freedom of expression for the poetic genius.[4] Vāmana (8th century A.D.) mentions the two divisions of prose *kāvya* as *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā*. He omits their definitions because, he thinks, they are either insufficient or confusing. He remains indifferent to the opinions of Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin both.[5] *Rudraṭa* (9th century A.D.) gives a detailed account of the two species of prose composition apparently modeled on Bāṇa's works.[6] Viśvanātha Kavirāja (14th century A.D) a propounder of the *rasa* school of Sanskrit poetics defines *kathā* in terms of his general definition of poetry as a statement the essence of which is *rasa*. According to him both *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* are prose narratives with plots generating *rasa* (*sarasaṁ vastu*). *Kathā* is interspersed with the verses in *vaktra* and *aparavaktra* metres. In the beginning there are prayer to the meritorious and denouncement of the wicked. An *ākhyāyikā* has only some conventional structural differences such as eulogy of the poet's own pedigree *(vaṁśānukirtanam)* and of other poets as well. The story at some places is interspersed with verses in *āryā, vaktra* and *aparavaktra* meteres and its sections are titled as *āśvāsas*.[7] The words used apart from their semantic depth, must have phonetic excellence. As regards the narrative technique and prosodiac convention, Viśvanātha endorses upon his predecessors.

Now it appears that the genre division of the ancient and medieval Sanskrit critics is mostly technical or formal without any criteria that take account of a precise aesthetic foundation. Especially the prose genres are not formulated on the specific aesthetic qualities. The definition of *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* by Viśvanātha is perhaps more appealing than his predecessors' on the ground that he considers both *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* as poetic as other forms of literature in as much as *rasa* is their essence (soul or *ātman*). Among the formal differences, the narrative technique adopted in both the forms, *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā*, is an anticipation of the prose narratives of the recent times. Writers like Bāṇabhaṭṭa have sufficiently proved that the aesthetic merit of a literary discourse does not consist only in a stylized composition. What is necessary for a poet is not mere versification of a piece of practical communication. In other words, the Sanskrit critics had a very clear view that verse is not a criterion of poetry. They rightly perceived the difference between communication *(vārtā)* and poetry *(kāvya)*.

In fact, what compels the Sanskrit tradition to rank Bāṇabhaṭṭa with Vālmīki and Kālidāsa is the creation of images and the generation of *rasa*. The Sanskrit critics would have agreed with the Russian formalists and Structuralists as also with the New Critics that language is not merely a vehicle of thought in poetry. But at the same time, they would not agree with the formalists that poetry is merely a specific use of language or a linguistic device ('defamiliarization': Mukarowsky; 'automatization': Sklovsky) where human contents like emotions, situations, and reality are only contextual. Nor would they agree with the humanism of the New Critics that poetry is a linguistic order that deals with human understanding: a specific attitude towards human life. When the New Critics have not emphasized the emotional aspects of poetry, the Sanskrit critics are insistent upon it. One

may of course, think that the schools of *alaṁkāra, rīti, guṇa* and *dhvani* have not emphasized emotion as the central point of poetry in their preoccupation with the linguistic character of poetry on both the semantic and phonetic levels. But Abhinavagupta concludes that *alaṁkāradhvani* and *vastudhvani* lead to *rasa-dhvani*. If *rasa-dhvani* is the suggestion of an emotion it pinpoints the argument of Abhinavagupta that human emotion is the central point of poetry, and it is on this point that practical discourse differs from literary discourse.[8] The tenants of *dhvani* school and *rasa* school may be very suitably combined in saying that literary discourse suggests human emotion not through references (as in practical discourse) but through images (*lakṣaṇā* and *vyañjanā*).

Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī* and *Harṣacarita* are the brightest prose narratives in Sanskrit literature fulfilling the central demand of the Sanskrit critical culture: Both of them suggest human emotions through imagery. If *Kādambarī* suggests the emotion of love *Harṣacarita* suggests the emotion of courage by powerful imagery. When these basic elements are with these basic qualities, a prose narrative differs from other forms of literature, particularly epic and lyric, for its specific narrative technique. To distinguish *kathā* from *ākhyāyikā* on this ground is justified. If *ākhyāyikā* is a narrative of first person, *kathā* is a narrative of third person or first person. Accepting these two criteria as vital (such as kidnapping of a woman etc.) are without any aesthetic interest.

It appears that while subclassifying the prose narratives the Sanskrit critics have not been sufficiently aware of the thematic differences. To count the prose narratives of varied nature like *Pañcatantra, Kādambarī* and *Harṣacarita* under the same category of *ākhyāyikā* would certainly appear unsystematic for a modern critic. The recent thematic approaches would classify these three as allegory, romance and biography respectively. Of course, broadly speaking, they may be said to be *ākhyāyikās*. To count such diverse texts as *Pañcatantra* and *Harṣacarita* under the same category of prose narrative would certainly appear uncritical in our times. Most probably the Sanskrit critics were not aware of any thematic classification. Even if the general definition of poetry as "delightful statement" is accepted, the delight due to the discourse of *Pañcatantra* and *Harṣacarita* must not be having the same root. One might compare the 'Book of Job' in the *Old Testament* and Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria* and can imagine counting them under a single category. Current scholarship has reasons to ridicule such categorization, which is based on narrative technique or some minor elements. The Aristotelian categorization of literature on the ground of the nature of action they represent is undoubtedly more rational. Epic and tragedy differ on the ground of narrative technique, i.e., on the manner of representation: Epic is narrative (it narrates the action) and tragedy represents the action dramatically (the agents of action directly presents it). One may argue that if epic and tragedy are differentiated on the ground of narrative technique or manner of representation, then distinction between *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* on the ground of narrative technique and some minor characteristics is not inappropriate. But one should remember that Aristotle would never have counted *Pañcatantra* and *Harṣacarita* under the same category as the action of the latter is serious

and that of former is ludicrous in spite of the strong moral level underlying it. When Aristotle says that epic and tragedy represent serious human action, he is thematically counting them under the same category and is distinguishing comedy from both of them. The point is that the Sanskrit critics should have subdivided the prose narratives with whatever name they might have chosen under the character of the action that is represented in the plot of each category. Therefore, the distinction between *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* should have been more appropriate on the basis of this nature of action that is represented so that *Harṣacarita* would have been distinguished from both *Kādambarī* or *Vāsavadattā* on the one hand, and from *Pañcatantra* on the other. In the language of Sanskrit criticism all the four forms of Greek literature—epic, lyric, tragedy and comedy are delightful statements or discourses that generate *rasa*. But as our enjoyment of comedy differs from that of tragedy so also our enjoyment of *Harṣacarita* is of a different category from that of the enjoyment of *Pañcatantra*. This needs no further elaboration. One can easily say that the *rasa* of *Pañcatantra* is of comic character or *hāsya* whereas the *rasa* of *Harṣacarita* is *vīra* or of a serious nature which is altogether different from the former one. We want to say that even on the ground of *rasa* the subclassification of this prose narrative is inappropriate.

We might reorient the traditional subclassification of prose narrative of Sanskrit literature in the light of modern literary criticism. The literary works of Sanskrit on the thematic ground-on the ground of the nature of action represented in the literary work concerned are proposed to be called 'biography' (in Sanskrit, say, *Caritakāvyam*), and the rationale of this proposal is based on the established form of this genre in the Western literary history from Plutarch to Lytton Strachery. As this biography is a thematic classification, it does not concern with the medium of narration whether in prose or verse. In the traditional criticism works like *Buddhacarita, Raghuvaṁśa* and *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* are counted under the same category, the epic. When it is proposed to distinguish *Harṣacarita* from *Pañcatantra* it is also proposed to distinguish *Buddhacarita* from *Raghuvaṁśa* because whether written in prose or verse they represent the type of action clearly distinguished from the type represented by the other works. *Buddhacarita* represents the serious actions of a person of history, may be with mythical ornamentations, whereas *Raghuvaṁśa* is the representation of a series of serious actions of several mythical persons, may be with historical references. Similarly *Harṣacarita* represents the serious action of a historical person with mythical allusions, whereas *Pañcatantra* represents the actions of human beings, lower animals and birds with allegorical references, and *Kādambarī* represents the actions of imaginary persons with a high pitch of literary devices. *Buddhacarita* and *Harṣacarita* would differ from any historical account of such persons as depicted in the works concerned for the way they have treated these actions. If Plutarch is not a Herodotus or Strachery is not a Toynbee, *Aśvaghoṣa* and *Bāṇabhaṭṭa* also are not the Indian counterparts of Herodotus and Toynbee.

In this connection the credit must go to Amarasiṁha, the famous Sanskrit lexicographer (4th century A.D.) who has distinguished *kathā* from *ākhyāyikā* on the ground

that the first is a prose narrative that represents imaginary human action *(prabandha kalpanā kathā)* and the latter is a prose narration that represents the action of history *(ākhyāyikopalabdhārtha)*.[9] Without any mention of the differences in narrative techniques Amarasiṁha's categorisastion is of a sound critical order which has been surprisingly ignored by the poeticians. When Bāṇabhaṭṭa himself is categorizing *Kādambarī* as *kathā*[10] and *Harṣacarita* as *ākhyāyikā*,[11] it is very difficult to say whether he is doing so on the basis of narrative technique or prosodic convention or on the nature of the action represented—imaginary or historical. But his own categorisation has always set a model for the latter critics like *Viśvanātha* who has clearly kept *Harṣacarita* in view while defining an *ākhyāyikā*. Keeping Amarasiṁha in view our present categorization of a class of writing as biography on the ground of the nature of action represented-imaginary or historical-is not, however, without critical justification.

Notes and References

[1] *Sāhitya Darpaṇa*, VI. 314-337.
[2] *Agnipurāṇa*, 337-112.
[3] Bhāmaha, *Kāvyālaṁkāra*, I. 25-29.
[4] Daṇḍin, *Kāvyādarśa*, I. 23-30.
[5] Vāmana, *Kāvyālaṁkāra Sūtra Vṛtti, Vṛtti* on 1. 3. 32.
[6] Rudraṭa, *Kāvyālaṁkāra*, XVI. 20-23.
[7] *Sāhitya Darpaṇa*, VI. 332-36.
[8] Locan on *Dhvanyāloka*, 1. 5.
[9] *Amarakoṣa*, 1. 6. 5-6.
[10] *Kādambarī, Prāstāvika Ślokāḥ*, 20.
[11] *Harṣacarita*, 1. 19.

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Computational Aesthetics and Chess as an Art Form

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Chess is not considered an art form by everyone and there has been much debate in both directions as to why it should or should not qualify as one. In the first place, the term 'art form' is ambiguous especially to those who do not move in art circles which includes most chess players.[1] Nevertheless most people will readily acknowledge the beauty of chess and its aesthetic appeal. In fact, that is one of the main reasons they play. In this article I review some of the arguments that have been presented for and against chess as an art form. I will then demonstrate where the confusion lies and explain why, considering recent computer advances in the area, it is important that chess be universally accepted as such.

I. Introduction

Chess is an ancient board game that is played in many different forms all over the world. Even though limited mainly to aristocracy in the past it is now just as common in every strata of society.[2] The object of the game like any other is to win or more precisely, checkmate the enemy king. This means to force its capture on the next move. A lot can happen between the start of a game and its end. Won positions can suddenly and unexpectedly be lost and vice-versa. Chess is therefore neither dull nor unchallenging. However, it is a game where simple rules lead to complexity that even the most powerful computers today cannot fathom.[3] It is in this complexity that many players find what they call 'art.'

Art has many definitions that change with time but what matters most is the immediate perception people get about something when it is called 'art.' Looking at just one definition of art; *"the expression or application of creative skill and imagination, especially through a visual medium;"* chess can immediately be seen to qualify.[4] Strangely, it is never demeaning to have something called a work of art but to have it denied that privilege, can be. Does this imply that everything should qualify as a work of art? Certainly not. Who then, should decide whether or not something is an art form? My opinion is that those most knowledgeable of the subject in question know best given that the term, 'art' is not totally ambiguous.

II. Review

Another definition of art form is *a conventionally established form of artistic composition.*[5] A good example would be the novel. Few would dispute that a novel can be a great work of art seeing how so much creativity and time needs to be invested into one. Some might argue that on the basis of creativity alone, chess can and should be considered an art form since that quality happens to be advantageous during play and is often employed.[6] Others would disagree implying that creativity in chess is little more than promiscuous use of the term.[7] Lord acknowledges the aesthetics of chess in elements like 'surprise moves' and also due to its expressive properties but claims that since it is not *intended* as art, chess is merely an aesthetic object at best. One of many she says (e.g., stamps), that is nothing more than a gerrymandering of the 'art form' concept. She and others who oppose chess as an art form also believe the competitive nature of chess to be a prohibitive factor in the pursuit of whatever we might construe as worthy-of-being-called-art in the game.

Humble writes that chess is at least a minor art form due to its aesthetic values derived from its nature as a contest. He basically argues that the principles of beauty in chess are essentially elements of effective play and therefore beauty is not of secondary importance in the game since the objective is to win. Also, he says that chess games are to be enjoyed as works of art but not necessarily *great* works of art hence the term *minor* art form.[8] This is sensible enough given how it might be considered ludicrous to compare a tournament chess game to a great novel or painting. Even so, a minor art form is still an art form and far from gerrymandering the concept. Both Humble and Lord however, neglect to mention much about composed chess problems.

Ravilious correctly points out that aesthetics—which seems to be a prerequisite for chess to be even be considered as art—is most prevalent not in tournament or over-the-board games but in composed chess problems.[9] He also severs the seemingly inextricable link between aesthetics and competitive chess[10] that he believes Humble had made. This confusion arises from the simple fact that aesthetic play in chess is effective play, but not necessarily the other way around. Ravilious and Humble are actually on the same side in this matter. Both acknowledge chess as art but are simply looking at the issue from different angles.

Rachels on the other hand, likens the struggle in chess to that of the struggle in art and uses some of the arguments made by mathematician and chess player Richard Reti. Rachels also compares chess to other accepted art forms like music and explains how they are not so different with the exception of chess being somewhat more 'limited' given its rules.[11] He is also not alone in seeing a parallel between the aesthetics of chess and beauty in mathematics.[12] As with Humble, Rachels would likely have made a better case by focusing more on composed chess problems. Even so, it is intriguing to note that good arguments can and have be made in favour of chess as art without even resorting to the one area where it probably suits the definition best.

Lorand likens chess games to art in that both have differing values (e.g., between games or between paintings) but stresses that this does not in fact affect their classification as art, of which it simply either is or is not. Just because some chess games may be less aesthetic than others, it is not grounds enough to question the game's status as an art form, analogous to how some paintings may be *less* appealing than others yet this does not affect its classification as art.

Smuts however, considers video games more of an art form than chess due to stronger support for video games from representational theories of art. Technically he is probably right but I doubt all those who oppose chess as an art form would welcome video games into the fray quite as easily. Also, there is virtually no parallel between chess and video games apart from the broad concept of both being 'games'. Additionally, chess is quite specific in form and nature whereas the concept of a video game is amorphous.

No one (including Lord) really disputes the aesthetic appeal and artistic intentions of composed chess problems but unless competitive chess is also accounted for the game will likely not be accepted as an art form in any real sense. Competitiveness is one of the main issues anyone might have with chess as art. How can a game where the main objective is to win be considered an art form when artistic intention seemingly goes against that aim? The following section explains how beauty, being a prerequisite to acceptance as an 'art form,' is no barrier even when taking into account competitive chess.

III. Separation of Beauty From Other Aesthetic Factors

Beauty in chess can be viewed as a subset of a larger framework of 'aesthetic principles' or guidelines that may or may not directly translate to a particular aspect of the game (e.g., sequence of moves, entire game, problem composition etc.) being commonly referred to as, 'beautiful.' As an analogy, a painting may be beautiful in the opinion of a lot of people but (looking only at two examples) while both its colours and history are compelling to them, only the former would translate to aesthetic appreciation in the sense of perceived beauty that one would typically get from a painting, per se. The fact that its history may be no less important or adds 'aesthetic appeal' does not negate its creative use of colours that in fact make it beautiful.

In chess compositions for instance, aesthetic factors include but are not limited to things like preferential themes, originality, effects of duals, partial anticipation and penalization of symmetry.[13] These are things, like the history of a painting, are not necessarily related to the perceived *beauty* of a problem yet cannot be entirely separated from the concept of aesthetics in compositions.[14] Even chess composers tend to incorrectly conflate what are more appropriately called 'composition conventions' with the idea of beauty. The inherent 'beauty' of a chess problem, though more prominent in that domain, is actually no different than the beauty in competitive games and this is explained next.

In competitive chess, a fantastic combination made under dire time constraints has an aesthetic quality to it but like the conventions in compositions mentioned above,

'time' does not relate to *beauty* in chess as much as say the move sequence itself that would probably have employed a specific theme, sacrifice and violated chess heuristics. In fact, principles that *do* relate specifically to beauty in chess have been reiterated by master players over the decades and even determined experimentally.[15] This applies to all of chess (compositions and competitive play) as long as the rules of the game are the same.

Margulies derived 8 principles of beauty in chess from the judgement of expert chess players who were shown pairs of chess positions and asked to select the more beautiful solution.[16] The method he used is consistent with experimental aesthetics and was not based on his personal preference.[17] He concluded eight principles of beauty namely *successfully violate heuristics, use the weakest piece possible, use all of the piece's power, give more aesthetic weight to critical pieces, use one giant piece in place of several minor pieces, employ themes, avoid bland stereotypy and that neither strangeness nor difficulty produces beauty.*

You will notice that these principles are mostly related to strategies of play and can easily apply to both composed problems and competitive chess. Even where there is no intention to *create* beauty on the board that does mean it is not there. The question is only to what degree beauty is there. Like Lorand explains, different valuation should not affect classification as art. However, when looking for works of art in chess you are more likely to find it in composed chess problems[18] than in over-the-board games.

The separation of principles of beauty in chess like those derived by Margulies from other aesthetic factors by which chess problems are typically judged (i.e., conventions) and analogous factors in tournaments (e.g., time constraints, identity of the players etc.), is essential to counter the arguments of those who see no relation between the established artistic nature of chess and competitive play.

The most beautiful composition or game may not win a composition tournament or brilliancy prize[19] but one that is not beautiful at all certainly will not.[20] This is all the clarification that was needed between Humble and Ravilious in their support for chess as art.[21] I have not taken into account the concept of 'intellectual beauty' to which chess also qualifies because that only serves to compare it with things like the aesthetic appreciation of equations in mathematics.[22] This would come under the larger framework of aesthetic principles as previously described.

It is also important to note that included in this framework are also goals and intentions in chess that are not entirely independent of their audience.[23] For example, when something is done during a game just to please the audience, it need not necessarily be *beautiful* even though the audience might find it appealing for other reasons. Looking specifically at intentions in competitive play, it is true that in master level tournaments where money is involved, aesthetic considerations are outweighed by the desire to win.

Even so, if we consider that most chess games (with opponents) the world over are played for enjoyment and *outside* any kind of tournament setting, we must concede

that aesthetics, particularly in the form of the principles of beauty as discussed above, is the main motivator. Playing merely to win is simply not enough.[24] To quote even the greatest (and arguably the most competitive) chess player of all time Gary Kasparov who said, *I want to win, I want to beat everyone, but I want to do it in style*. Therefore the competitive nature of chess does not necessarily imply things that might be true for tournaments (such as goals of having to win above all) as also true for (friendly) games outside a tournament setting, which are far greater in number.

The bridge between the accepted artistry of chess problem composition and competitive play should now be established beyond reasonable contestation. Art is simply more prevalent in chess problems but not necessarily absent in competitive play. This has even been proven scientifically.[25] Experiments show that in some cases, aesthetic qualities relating to beauty specifically, are in fact more prominent in tournament games between highly rated players than in some published compositions. Clearly whatever the intentions during competitive play, it should not affect the status of chess as an accepted art form.

IV. The Importance of Aesthetic Recognition in Chess and its Acceptance as an Art Form

In this section, I will provide reasons why aesthetics in chess is more important than it might seem and why the game itself should be unequivocally recognized as an art form. The first reason is that aesthetics or beauty in chess has a lot to do with peoples' fascination for the game, whether as problem composers or even competitive players. Elevation to the status of an art form would not only greatly please players, advocates and enthusiasts alike but would also permit wider acceptance of the game as a creative and intellectual pastime that is healthy for children and adults.[26] The perception of chess as a 'difficult' and 'thinking' (even worse, that you actually need to be 'smart') game could do well with a new aura of creativity and art that is less intimidating and happens to be true, by the way.

Professional chess is perhaps partly to blame for how the game is perceived contemporarily because touting chess as anything other than a competitive sport (such as hockey or football) would result in less sponsorship for tournaments and players. In contrast drawing, writing or playing a musical instrument has more appeal than chess primarily because of its perceived artistic nature yet in truth they are not very different from the game in that respect. They are also similar to chess in the sense that competitions between artists, authors and musicians are not uncommon. Chess however, has the advantage of possessing logical and mathematical qualities that would make it a viable alternative as an intellectual and creative pastime.[27]

The second reason why aesthetic recognition in chess is important is so more women are attracted to the game. Women it seems, are not as interested as men when it comes to chess because of its perception as nothing more than an 'intellectual sparring'

contest.[28] For those who doubt this fact, a casual visit to any chess club will clearly show men outnumbering women by a factor as high as 5 to 1. Women are deprived of an artistic and intellectual activity whose benefits are currently being enjoyed mostly by men. This inequality needs to be remedied.

One might wonder then why more women are not drawn to chess composition since that domain is less competitive and more artistic than competitive chess. The reason is probably because problem compositions derive their beauty much less from visual appeal (geometry, lack of clutter etc.) and more from the interactions of the pieces (sacrifices, themes, heuristic violations, economy etc.) in relation to the rules of chess, making it no different from the competitive domain in that respect. The beauty of chess is therefore holistic and unique. As an art form, it should be appreciated on its own terms. One does not look at a painting and expect to hear music. In the same way, one appreciates the beauty of chess not in the same way as one might the beauty of a painting, musical composition or literary work.

Once chess (competitive and composition) is recognized as an art form, it should become more amenable to women in the way that paintings, music and literature are. Men do not dominate these arts as much as they do chess. Some might point out that the mathematical aspect of chess might be the real culprit but unfortunately there is no conclusive scientific basis to assume women are necessarily inferior to men when it comes to mathematics. One study even shows women performing 12% better at math due to the mere absence of men in the room.[29] If anything, this lends credence to the theory that chess is probably intimidating for we can do little to shoo the men away but can certainly do something to make the game more appealing to women.

The third and perhaps most important reason I would like to bring up in this section is that aesthetics presents a new and fertile area of artificial intelligence research *if and only* if chess is recognized as an art form comparable to music and literature. A brief history on the subject is pertinent here. Chess has been a major subject of investigation in artificial intelligence for many decades. Researchers wanted to understand the mechanics of human thinking processes and chess was the perfect subject because they thought, *what else could we be doing in a chess game if not thinking*? Claude Shannon proposed a method of developing a computer program to play chess and essentially, the same technique is still used today.

However, there have been several improvements over the years in search techniques and evaluation functions to make computers play better. The irony is that we are not much closer to learning how *humans* think but instead have developed methods that rely on brute processing to make machines *simulate* thinking. As a result, today even personal computers are able to play grandmaster level chess. John McCarthy (one of the founding fathers of AI) once said that he hoped one day to see machines playing high-level chess on the slowest machines. That would better illustrate effectiveness of technique

(what AI was after all along) than brute force computing. Even so, the research that went into chess has been of considerable benefit to other areas in AI such as tree search, pattern recognition[30] and particularly automated reasoning.[31]

Alas, now that computers are only getting faster and do indeed play better chess than humans, there seems little left to do with the game. This is where aesthetics comes in. Computers may be capable of playing chess near perfectly but they have not an inkling as to what beauty in the game is. Earlier, I explained how much of chess lies in its aesthetic qualities so it is reasonable that research should progress in that direction now. Not only was chess correctly viewed back then (in the 1950s) as a fertile, intellectual activity worthy of scientific investigation but it should also now be seen the same way with regard to aesthetics and creativity, i.e., as an art.[32] The question then arises: why chess?

Firstly, chess is a zero-sum perfect information game[33] within a finite domain (8x8 board) with fixed rules. This makes it an ideal candidate for quantifiable scientific research. Even Margulies who derived the principles of aesthetics in chess (refer Section 3) had his intentions rooted in psychology rather than artificial intelligence or chess itself but saw the game as a good place for experimentation. The finite nature and clear rules of the game seemed like a perfect testing ground for deriving objective principles of beauty that might be applied in *other* areas, he thought.

Second, few other zero-sum perfect information games are known for their aesthetic value and none to the degree that exists in chess. Even in Go, which is technically far more complex to program than chess, there is comparatively very little literature on the aspect of beauty and even less detailing what exactly that means in the game. Go however, is poised to replace chess in traditional AI research because we do not yet have computers that play it as well as humans, unlike chess which has been 'conquered' for all practical purposes. The reason is that the game tree of Go is much too large for the methods employed is computer chess to work as well.

Chung-Jen Tan, manager of the Deep Blue team (the computer that eventually beat world champion chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov) told Scientific American in 1996 they would stop research into chess and move to other areas once the game became 'uninteresting'—that is when they understand enough about the game to derive benefit from it to improve their understanding of parallel processing.[34] The baton is perhaps due to be passed from chess to Go but the former should now detour onto another road, i.e., research into aesthetics because there is hardly a more amenable domain.

This may not happen however, because chess is not yet universally recognized as an art form. Not many researchers see beauty as a tangible or even existent aspect in chess *fundamentally because people do not see chess as art.* Unfortunately, it is quite common for researchers in any field to have to justify themselves to their superiors and research sponsors when the subject of interest is 'nothing more' than a mere game, especially

when it concerns a controversial aspect of said game. This Victorian attitude toward things that often suffer from false perception and compartmentalization has impeded progress for many years. Drawing similarities between different games and judging them equally insignificant is not only illogical but also misleading.

One should clearly be able to treat chess with more respect in terms of artistry or computational amenability than say tic-tac-toe (even though they are both zero-sum perfect information games), much less comparing it to golf or tennis and on such basis dismissing the game as trivial and not worthy of serious consideration in a particular discipline (i.e., aesthetics) for which there are strong grounds. For instance, many cultures over the centuries have immortalized themselves in the various artistic designs of their chess pieces and by changing its rules.[35] Should historical and anthropological research neglect this information because they have to do with *merely* a game or on the basis that by comparison, the design and artistry of golf clubs today might not provide much insight about our culture for future researchers?

To quell any concerns that art itself is perhaps not a serious domain of research, one should consider where researchers are indeed looking. In 1997 a competition was held at Stanford University between a human and a computer to see which could compose music in the style of Bach and the computer actually won.[36] In 1998 a computer called Brutus.1 actually wrote a short story entitled, 'Betrayal.'[37] Computational models for artwork have also been developed that allow computers to automatically generate and evaluate the aesthetics of images.[38] Work into these areas has been progressing considerably over the years and for no other reason than music, literature and images being contemporarily classified as accepted 'art forms.'

In fairness, chess has not been completely overlooked in this respect but the emphasis is always elsewhere. Ben Walls applied chess beauty principles into heuristics of the game to make computers play better of all things; not to identify or generate art on the board as one might expect.[39] Coincidentally, beauty heuristics do indeed reduce computational time in finding the best move under certain conditions. I would rather however, have preferred if the computer could tell me which positions I might find beautiful or aesthetically appealing. It is interesting to note that despite the misplaced emphasis, there are clearly benefits to such research.

According to Chen Zhi Xing, a retired chemistry professor and author of one of the strongest Go playing programs, Handtalk; the key to getting computers to play Go as well as chess is by finding a way for the computer to understand its beauty and 'visual magic.'[40] Currently, computers are particularly poor at Go because, as mentioned earlier, the same serial brute force techniques that work so well for chess do not apply to Go where parallel processing of information for pattern recognition is essential. Could our neglect of the study of aesthetics in chess (because it is not recognized as an art form) somehow contribute to our inadequacy in designing better computer programs not only for Go but

also in the myriad of other applications where it might be beneficial? If other things thought to be art are being vigorously researched by computer scientists, why not chess which is arguably far more amenable to computation?

Even in automatic chess composition where one would expect beauty to be taken into account to do a decent job comparable to human composers, it is not.[41] Researchers simply use heuristics that have very little to do with what is inherently beautiful about chess. Instead they rely on a few quantifiable chess *conventions* and include arbitrary values attributed to selected chess themes.[42] Researchers also passingly admit to being unable to quantify the aspect of beauty in chess problems. I think the problem is rather they are unwilling than unable. Most do not even look at the vast literature on the aesthetics of chess because to think of it as an art form is unconventional.

Douglas Hofstadter, a professor of computer science at Indiana University and author, writes in his Pulitzer Prize winning, *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* that chess is a creative enterprise with an unrestrained level of excellence that pertains to arts like music and literature.[43] Nearly two decades later in 1996, he said that recent computer gains have persuaded him that chess is not as lofty an intellectual endeavor as music and writing for they require a soul. He also said that, *It (chess) doesn't have deep emotional qualities to it, mortality, resignation, joy, all the things that music deals with. I'd put poetry and literature up there, too. If music or literature were created at an artistic level by a computer, I would feel this is a terrible thing.*[44]

It is puzzling how chess can be viewed as artistic but when computers are suddenly involved, not artistic anymore. I wonder if Professor Hofstadter would say the same thing about music, poetry and literature should computers ever get as good at it as they are at chess. My guess is no for these things are inherently accepted art forms, whilst chess is not-so-accepted.

V. Conclusion

In this article the main arguments by both sides with regard to whether chess should be considered an art form was reviewed. Clarification between the principles of beauty in chess and aesthetics in general was then presented. It was shown that chess problem composition and competitive play are not mutually exclusive from an artistic standpoint. In fact, the validity of the composed chess problem as at least a minor art form extends naturally to competitive play. This becomes even clearer once competitive chess is properly defined and not limited to the false perception of a tournament setting.

The importance of aesthetics in chess being recognized was also discussed and arbitrary dismissal of this facet of the game was shown to be unjustified. In addition to many other reasons that have already been exhaustively argued by others, I submit that chess is indeed an art form or at least more so than previously thought. Also, this recognition directly influences the perception of researchers to consider chess as a worthy subject matter in their fields, particularly artificial intelligence.

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Self and Style: The Development of Artistic Expression from Youth through Midlife to Old Age in the Works of Henrik Ibsen

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Abstract

Life-span creativity research has concentrated on the relationship between age and quality performance and has given little attention to qualitative change in manner and matter of artistic expression over time. This paper offers an analytical perspective that examines the interplay between artistic development and stages in the artist's life span, based on the lifetime creative output of Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). It is argued that scholars should examine the ways in which cultural and historical influences are filtered through the psychological underpinning of particular life stages. It is suggested that the prevalence of the lyrical modality of artistic expression in Ibsen's young adulthood is intrinsically related to youth, that the rigorous structure of his realistic plays draws from the normative experience of midlife, and that the fragmented abstractions of his late plays constitute an artistic expression of a psychological reality specific to old age.

Whereas much is known about the ways in which maturational processes effect qualitative transformations in artistic behaviour in the formative years, we know very little about effects of maturation later on in those adults who choose art as a career. The considerable body of knowledge, which has accumulated concerning the development of artistic creativity has centered on childhood and adolescence (e.g., Goodnow, 1977; Gardner, 1973; Golomb, 1973; Willats, 1977; Kellog, 1969). There appears to be a tacit assumption in creativity research that beyond a certain point, presumably in early adulthood, age is irrelevant for understanding the artistic personality. To the extent that age has been said to affect artistic production, this effect has generally been regarded as unfavorable, due to detrimental changes, allegedly commencing with midlife, in the physiological structures

supporting creative achievement (Lehman, 1953); to a decline in divergent thinking (Alpaugh and Birren, 1976); or to reduced *self-esteem* (Jaquish and Ripple, 1981). Although qualitative change in manner and matter of artistic expression over time is ubiquitous (Bornstein, 1984) most investigators of life-span creativity have given it little attention. This is due both to the conceptual confusion surrounding analysis of personality development beyond *childhood* (Neugarten, 1977) and to the focus of art criticism upon the formal analysis of isolated works (O'Connor, 1979). Consequently, little has been invested in the effort to link self-development and artistic expression in adulthood and old age, even though such an effort is likely to benefit both developmental theory and art history. This paper *offers* an analytical perspective that examines the interplay between artistic development and stages in the artist's life span, based on the lifetime creative output of Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). We chose Ibsen for two reasons: First, because his career is marked by an interplay of continuity and change—two key notions in any developmental discussion. Ibsen himself testifies the distinctness of the changes that his work underwent: "Quite a compact crowd now stands where I stood when I wrote my various books, but I am no longer there myself" (cited in Brustein, 1965, p. 72). There is also a consensus among literary scholars as to a division of his work into three distinct periods, differentiated on the basis of stylistic features: an early period, often referred to as Romantic-Lyrical (to his late thirties), consisting mainly of verse and dramatic poetry; a middle period of Realistic Drama (to his early sixties), characterized by contemporary, topical themes presented in plain prose and noted *for* well-bound narrative structure, calculated dialogue and well-differentiated characterization; and a late Symbolic period, make up of plays that, while preserving superficial similarities to the realistic convention, are marked by pervasive symbolism, underlying poetic tone, a retreat from strict realism and a deliberately fragmented structure (Koht, 1971; Meyer, 1971, Clurman, 1978).

However, these distinctions by periods are schematic and not always clear-cut; whereas the transition from the poetry of the early period to the prose of the middle period was abrupt, that between the middle and late periods was gradual, making it more difficult lo set clear boundaries. More importantly, notwithstanding the sharp stylistic differences, a common thread runs through Ibsen's literary corpus. The author himself urged that his works be examined not in isolation from one another but as a continuous development (Brustein, 1965).

Second, Ibsen's life and work lend *themselves* to analyse from a developmental perspective owing to the author's conscious and intense personal involvement in his creative output, *one* that oversteps the self-exposure common to most artists. This is aptly exemplified by another excerpt from his writings about himself and his work: "Everything I have written has the closest possible relationship with what I have *lived* through, even if that has not been my personal or actual experience..." p. 46).

Such writings clearly *reflect* the *close* relation self. Ibsen's use of the first person to allude to the evolution of his work can justifiably be considered the development of the

New, a reflection of his evolving self. It is our aim to explore the connection between the development of the *self* over the life span and the development of artistic output, taking Ibsen as a case study. In doing so, we enlist the aid of scholars who have studied human development from a life-span perspective, *Poetry to Prose: Early Adulthood to Midlife.*

The early years of Ibsen's literary *career*, from around the age of twenty to wide public recognition at the age of 37, were spent mostly in the writing of Romantic verse, characterized by lyrical excesses and heightened subjectivity. Towards the end of this period in Ibsen's work, a dissatisfaction with the lyrical mode and a commensurate attraction to prose are notable. Nine years before the actual shift of artistic language, Ibsen wrote in one of his poems: "Sail with caution: your poetical bark will overturn! At the slightest puff of life's irony" ("In the Picture Gallery," cited in Koht, 1971, p. 126).

Ibsen's initial breakthrough into the drama of contemporary life was *Love's Comedy* (1862). Though written in verse, this work is the author's first attempt to incorporate immediate, topical social concern in his medium. It is a declaration, albeit an embryonic and hesitant *one*, of his growing involvement with communal issues.

Brand (1865) and Peer Gynt (1867) constitute a further transition, in that they are dramatic poems, which combine the form of dramatic dialogue with poetic meter and rhyme. The middle-period plays, from *The League of Youth to Hedda Gabler*, can be seen as a consolidation of dramatic form (what Gestalt psychologists would call a "good" gestalt, precise articulation of situation and conflict, highly differentiated characterization, objective prose dramatic language and technical mastery. The nature of Ibsen's art at this stage is succinctly summarized by Brustein (1965, p. 65): in order to satisfy a pull toward prose, objective reality, and the problem of modern civilization [which] focuses on the *collective* as well as the individual...; language becomes *more* thin and chastened, characterization more specific, theme more contemporary. The focus is on prevailing social conditions and the issues they raise, and there is evidence of an underlying belief that social reform and personal emancipation are possible. At this stage in his career, Henrik Ibsen applied himself with the utmost conviction and fervor to representing *"real"* situations, *people*, and *problems*, with the objective of affecting some kind of change in them.

The characteristic stance of Ibsen toward his work in this middle *period* is *one* of detachment, of *self-suppression* in the service of an objective, structurally rigorous art form. His earlier *lyrical* excesses, defiant individuality and self-expressive freedom of verse are supplanted by keen observation on the part of an uninvolved observer. This functional neutralization of the self (one critic goes as far as to call it "self-denial," see Brustein, 1965) is highlighted by its distance from the intensely personal voice of his early work. Upon his creation of *Ghosts* (1881) Ibsen was able to state with confidence: "In none of my plays is the author so extrinsic, so completely absent as in this last one" (cited in Brustein, 1965, p. 71).

Ibsen's detachment was served by a change of voice from the first person of poetry to the third person of drama. In Ibsen's own words: "I myself have for the last seven or eight years hardly written a single verse, cultivated the much more difficult art of writing language spoken in life" (cited in Brustein, 1965, p. 63).

This personal testimony has important bearing on the problem of artistic change and development. Ibsen's contention that it is more difficult to recreate the prose language spoken in life than to write in verse says much about his creative process. For there is nothing intrinsically and objectively difficult in reaching effective artistic expression through prose. More likely, Ibsen was alluding to a personal difficulty he was facing, namely having to forego certain *indulgences* accorded by verse but not, as he perceived, at the disposal of prose writers—namely, spontaneity and license to immediately relieve emotional conflict.

Yet the gain in relevance and moral import outweighed the perceived loss, at least at that point in his life and career. Therefore, even though his creative temperament was initially more conducive to Romantic poetry, he felt an inner drive to cultivate the new language of artistic expression, reinforced by the conviction that it was more important to find an artistic expression of what he called "genuine, plain language of daily life." In short, the deliberate, conscious transition from poetry to prose was partly induced by an inner necessity, which, as we argue later, is of life-span developmental "nature." This detached and impersonal examination was aimed primarily at the manifold problems of modern civilization. From the uncertain probings of—*Youth* to the technical assurance of *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck*, Ibsen focused on contemporary social reality in terms of individual freedom and fulfillment. His protagonists are tied to their social *milieu* their conflicts, as *well* as their actual or implied resolutions, derive from the particular circumstances of that *milieu*. They take part in an ongoing/dialogue with the cultural establishment. Though Ibsen might have remained an anarchist deep within (see Brustein, 1965), his revolutionary disposition resources were channeled into an impartial examination and constructive (if fierce) criticism of the *illnesses* of his environment. His subject matter was comprehensive, and few aspects of Ibsen's contemporary society escaped his perceptive scrutiny during this period.

Underlying the dramatic treatment of social issues is an essentially positivistic and pragmatic premise. The core problems presented are assumed to be amenable to change and solution *once* the right attitude is taken and the individual is liberated from the tyranny of prejudice and other distorted ways of the mind. In this sense, Ibsen's midlife plays are intensely optimistic, tragic endings notwithstanding. In stark contrast to the dizzying heights of Peer Gynt's messianic revolts and escapades, Ibsen's characters of this period are grounded in hard-core reality, which provides manageable solutions and eventual happiness. With the exception of *The Wild Duck*, Eosmersholm and Hedda Gabler (all written toward the end of the realistic period), Ibsen's middle-period plays are not genuine tragedies (see Steiner, 1961). They *all* point to the possibility, if not always the actuality, of relief—not by tragic catharsis but through objective measures. Had there been a system to purify spring water, the conflict and grief of Dr. Stockmann in *An Energy of the People* would have been avoided. Had there been equal opportunity and massive social change with regard to women, Nora of *A Doll's House* would not have had to leave home to find *her* true identity. Had there been a cure for syphilis in Ibsen's lime? His Alving and her son in *Ghosts* would have been spared the tragedy, which befell them.

Ibsen's realistic dramas are pervaded by the underlying assumption that social faults are correctable. Ibsen's move, then, from poetry to prose is a move from emotional introspection and Realism to a realistic reflection of society's woes and a basic optimism as to their chances of resolution. Stylistically, it entails containment within a rigorous art structure, even at the expense of self-suppression. As old age approached, this became a price that Ibsen was less and less willing to pay Realism to Symbolism: Midlife to Old Age. As Ibsen progressively gained control over the dramatic form of realism, certain transformations became apparent. The affirmative tone was gradually toned down under the weight of self-reflection as Ibsen turned his well-developed critical faculties inward. Social reality progressively ceased to play the central thematic role. Ibsen's growing awareness of the limitations of realism is voiced by the character of Rubek, the aging sculptor in his last, and openly autobiographical play *When We Dead Awaken*. The analogy between the busts he had been making to order and Ibsen's realistic portrayals is self-evident:

> There is something suspicious, something concealed behind these images-something clandestine that others cannot see... Superficially there is "such a striking resemblance" as it is generally termed... but if you look at them with a deeply perceptive (eye, they have worthy, respectable horse faces and pig-headed mulish snouts, and flap-eared, low-browed skulls and... brutal, bull physiognomies... (Act I, Scene I).

Doubt in the viability of self-reformation is foreshadowed at the height of Ibsen's realistic period, in *Ghosts.* Faced with a personal tragedy, the heroine discovers she cannot forge an effective practice out of her liberated convictions because she, like the rest of her household, is haunted by the powerful ghosts of her past: "ghosts of innumerable old prejudices and beliefs, often cruelties and betrayals—we may not even be aware of them—but they are there just the same—and we can't get rid of them." (Act I, Scene II).

In the middle-period plays that follow, Ibsen explores epistemological alternatives to the hard logic of the realistic convention, but he does so tentatively, without overstepping the convention's set boundaries. Thus, for example, in *The Wild Duck* (1884), he remains superficially faithful to realistic conventions while challenging the very foundation of realism-truth. The play is illusion and of the reality, as long as a penetrating examination and eventual vindication of individual's right to hold onto an illusory version of it provides comfort and preserves threatened human dignity (Trilling, 1967).

Ibsen veils the play throughout with "a shadow of troubled questioning, perhaps even of despair, at the near impossibility of dispelling its own doubt at answering its own question" (Clurman, p.135). Self-doubt, a questioning of established values, and thematic as *well* as formal ambiguity characterize Ibsen's last four plays (1892-1899, written between the ages of 64 and 71). In these openly autobiographical works, which revolve around the fall of the man in power, art and life are, presented in their bare essentials. The author reintroduces the subjective self in a way reminiscent of, yet by no means identical to, the

poetry of his early adulthood. He clearly identifies with his protagonists, three of whom—Solness in *The Master Builder*, Borkman in *John Gabriel Barkman,* and therefore mentioned poet-artist, Rubek—are successful, dominant, aging men, past their peak. They are characterized by disillusionment, remorse, and a thorough reconsideration of former ideals and priorities. The Shift in subject matter is complemented by a stylistic change. The manipulative, artificial aspect of artistic creation is deliberately deemphasized; the overt, incisive speech, so characteristic of the works of Ibsen's middle period, is transformed in his old age into hesitant, broken lines and self-contradictory statements. Take, for example, the following excerpt from a dialogue between the aging sculptor Rubek and his wife in *When We Dead Awaken:*

> I am happy Maja, perfectly happy. In one way, at least for, of course, there's a certain happiness in feeling totally free and independent—in having plenty of everything one could imagine wishing for. In material terms, anyway; Don't you agree? (Act I, Scene I)

The underlying rhythm of this and numerous other passages in the last plays underscores the irony, which features so prominently in them. The reassurance of strong, positive statements ("perfectly happy," "of course," "totally," "plenty of everything") is immediately negated by equally powerful expressions of doubt ("in a way," "a certain happiness," "anyway," "Don't you agree?"). Ambiguity of speech and motivation—even of action—becomes an integral part of the total design. The characters in these plays inhabit a world dominated by oxymorons, wherein successes are "in fact I failures, defeats are victorless and death is a momentous awakening. Related to the ambivalent and broken" speech is the deliberately ambiguous literary genre. Translating *When We Dead Awaken,* Meyer reports he found himself continually feeling how much easier my task *would have* been *had he* written it in poetry? (1973, p. 107).

Yet, the highly evocative, uncertain "poetry of defeat" (Steiner, 1961) of Ibsen's late years is a far cry from the passionate poetry of his youth. Essentially, the earlier stylistic element is integrated into the fabric of the maturer work so as to facilitate and regain a measure of spontaneity—that spontaneity which Ibsen believed he had had to sacrifice to the rigid formality of his midlife works. For many readers and theater-goers, including a number of important critics, Ibsen's last dramas constitute an uncomfortable coexistence of theatrical idioms, creating a "cloudiness, an ineffectuality, which was very little like anything that Ibsen had displayed before" (Edmund Gosse, cited in *Gassner*, 1964, p. 371).

Critics have been quick to point out weaknesses, including fragmentation, inadequate coordination of scenes, and factual contradictions. For instance, criticism has been leveled at. The extreme brevity of the final act in *When We Dead Awaken* (lasting a mere quarter of an hour), in which the action gains momentum toward the "awakening of the dead spirits." Meyer (1973) offers two hypotheses to account for the fragmented brevity. The first is in line with the age-decrement hypothesis relating intellectual functions to biological aging (see Botwinick, 1977). According to this fundamental worldview, the

brevity and incompleteness of the act was due to physical exhaustion under the immense strain of "executing an appropriate final act, especially to so self-revealing a play" (Botwinick, 1977, p. 308).

While this interpretation cannot be ruled out, it meets with some difficulty. Firstly, it is based on the unsupported assumption that a final act for an autobiographical, self-revealing play demands more physical energy than a less self-revealing work. Secondly, although the first two acts of *When We Dead Awaken* are a considerable departure in dramatic language from preceding plays, there is no evidence of creative or intellectual weakness in their carefully wrought construction of dialogue. The alternative hypothesis is that Ibsen "felt a strange compulsion to leave [the act] as a fragment" (Meyer, 1973, p. 308).

The expression "strange compulsion" is a significant one, as it connotes a sense of urgency and inevitability, suggesting that Ibsen had been driven from within toward the fragmented brevity of the last act and the stylistic features which are largely characteristic of the other late plays. Contrary to the age-decrement hypothesis, the evidence points not to a quantitative decline but to a qualitative transformation. The stylistic changes of the last period were a deliberate effort to create a structure that accommodates imperfections, impurities and contradictions.

That is, Ibsen consciously set out to affect a dramatic form, which would accommodate the inherent contradictions that occupied him at this point of his life and that defined his late work. The structural "flaws" of these last plays should therefore be seen as a "failure by design" rather than as an inevitable consequence of fatigue or energy depletion brought on by old age. It is noteworthy that audiences and critics have only recently come to fully appreciate these features of Ibsen's last plays (similar expressions are found in works of many an aging artist; see Clark, 1972; Munsterberg, 1983; Arnheim, 1986). In *Artistic Style* and *Life-span Development*, we contend that the sequence and nature of Ibsen's three distinct literary periods are not arbitrary, but rather are affected by life-span developmental processes. Although purists, who oppose the employment of factors extraneous to art in discussions of artistic development, are likely to reject such an approach, the reference to the relation between artistic expression and life-span processes is by no means intended to undermine the role played by cultural, historical and domain-specific influences. Rather we argue that scholars should examine the ways in which these influences are filtered through the psychological underpinning of particular life stages.

We thus suggest that the prevalence of the lyrical modality of artistic expression in Ibsen's young adulthood is intrinsically related to youth, that the rigorous structure of his realistic plays draws from the normative experience of midlife, and that the fragmented abstractions of his late plays constitute an artistic expression of a psychological reality specific to old age.

The association between poetry and youth is so prevalent that it has become something of a popular myth, occasionally served by poets themselves. An Israeli poet once commented on the designation "young poets:"

> The age cross-section of "young poets" is unusually high, because it is hard for poets to detach themselves from the magic of this term.... The Romantic period bequeathed to *all* of us the idea that the poet must die young.... By the same token, Teasers who prefer to hold onto the dark magic let the poet remain young in spite of themselves and their age. It is like an obsession (*Haaretz*, November 16, 1963).

The poet Keats aptly captured the mental attitude necessary for the making of poetry in what he called "sublime egotism." This coinage embraces the essence of the correspondence of self and style in young adulthood, in that it connotes the intense involvement of the artist in the works produced, the messianic ambition and grandeur of protagonists (Brandis a prototype) and a movement of the creative spirit above and beyond the social *milieu*. This association between emotional lyricism and youth is supported by scholars of adult development from various theoretical vantage points. In a sample covering several historical periods and cultural backgrounds, Simonton (1975; following Lehman, 1953) found that lyrical poetry tends to peak in the late teens through age thirty, while novelists appear to excel later in life. Simonton accounts for this by referring to poetry as a vehicle that lends itself to the conveyance of subjective moods.

It might be said that verses set the reality of the poet apart. "By not being prose, by having meter or rhyme or a pattern of formal recurrence, language imposes on the mind a sense of special occasion" (Steiner, 1961, p. 239). From a psychoanalytical perspective, Jaques (1965) speaks of young adulthood as a period of precipitate, hot-from-the-fire creativity, in accordance with the young adult's propensity for projection and acting out defenses. From a Jungian perspective, Neumann (1959) sees the creations of youth as the perfect expression of an archetypical fusion between self and reality (Numinosum). Lyrical poetry, then, is the art of the first person. External, "objective" reality does not have an independent existence; it can be rejected, transformed by the author's imagination, ignored, or magnified, but it is always perceived and responded to from within.

This extreme subjectivity is linked to oscillations between a generalized feeling of manic omnipotence and an overwhelming awareness of frailty and insignificance (as in the character of Peer Gynt). Reality is an abstract idea that is appropriated by the creative self and freely, even capriciously, manipulated. With the advent of middle age, constraints dictated by reality are on the rise. Socio-psychological studies on aspects of adult development highlight the need of individuals approaching their midlife to carve a niche in their community and gain recognition for their professional achievement. Their tendency to be concerned with effectiveness in the broader social world often leads to a search for objective information on the external environment. They must be willing to align desires and capabilities with the demands apparent in their environment (Mumford and Gustafson, 1988).

Indeed, a number of studies document a pragmatic disposition and a preference for the attainable among adults in their thirties and forties (e.g., Vaillant, 1977; Levinson,

1978; Lowenthal, 1976). These theorists conceive psycho-social development in midlife in terms of a deepening embeddedness in professional and familial systems regulated by well-defined social contexts. The normative tasks generally facing the middle-aged individual consist in the establishment of professional (career) and familial nuclei. Similar notions have been raised by psychologists of a psychoanalytical persuasion. Several scholars have pointed to the developmental significance of the mid-thirties for people in general and artists in particular. These include Lehman's (1953) findings of the peaking of outstanding creativity in general and of tragedy in particular between the ages of 35 and 40, and Guttman's (1977) characterization of 40 year olds as actively mastering their environment and boldly taking risks. Levinson (1978) refers to the psychological reality of the middle-aged (person in terms of a higher differentiation of the self, leading to affirmer and more resilient structuring of the social self, a stage he terms "Becoming One's Own Man." In a similar vein, Vaillant's (1977) notion of Career Consolidation focuses on occupational performance.

Middle age brings an awareness of finality, and consequently, in psychoanalytic terminology, reactivation of death anxiety (Jaques, 1965). In terms of artistic expression this often results in a certain tightness of structure, a formal closure as a defense against the threat to creative longevity. While technical skill and practice-based facility increase, so does one's awareness of finality and shrinking opportunities. This reevaluation leads middle-aged people to "focus on control within a framework provided by realistic and attainable objectives" (Mumford and Gustafson, 1988).

The middle-aged Ibsen "mastered" his social environment by containing it within a highly differentiated structure. The transition to midlife entailed for him a move from intuitive syncretism to rigorous analysis, from free-flowing meandering to systematic articulation, and from impulsiveness to meticulous calculation. The author began to act from within the system, even as his work undermined that system. Revolt ceased to be messianic and became social (Brustein, 1965). The constraints of reality are mirrored in the formal structure, internal consistency and rule abeyance one finds in Ibsen's midlife dramas. With the transition to old age, however, the rigorous structure is often seriously questioned, supplanted by ambivalence and ambiguity. Ambivalence often grows out of a psychological reorganization which typifies old age, and which has received attention in several life-span personality-development theories, in concepts such as Integrity versus Despair (Erikson, 1982), Interiority (Neugarlen, 1968) Individuation (Jung, 1933) and Life Review (Butler, 1963) the inward movement characteristic of these notions help in understanding Ibsen's late plays. With increasing individuation and progressive physical and psychological vulnerability, there is a tendency to strip down artifice. This might suggest that the "strange compulsion" attributed to the elderly Ibsen, to leave the last act of *When We Dead Awaken* as a fragment, was the outcome of an aging process characterized by growing ambiguity and ambivalence toward the positivistic conception of realistic drama.

The above case study of Ibsen's literary corpus, viewed from the perspective of life-span processes, suggests that there is a logic ingrained in human development that underlies transformations of artistic expression.

Further research into the nature of personality development in adulthood and old age, which has recently gained impetus, is likely to shed more light on the revealed correspondence between the artist's style and self.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Noël Carroll, *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. ix + 450 (ISBN. 0-521-78656-8).

The volume contains essays published by the author covering a period of the last decade and a half of the last century where he had been consistently advocating for a distinction between aesthetics and philosophy of art, two areas of cultural practices, according to him, that are confusingly identified causing thereby a severe intellectual error that one generation suffers from. Therefore he argues strongly that we must go "beyond aesthetics" in order that we may understand and appreciate artworks appropriately.

According to Carroll, aesthetics as a branch of knowledge developed during the second half of the eighteenth century and made progress through a large part of the twentieth century through the critics who identified artwork by its formal and sensuous properties and in terms of a specific response to it called "aesthetic experience," that is defined by its "disinterestedness" of the audience called otherwise an "aesthetic attitude." *Art qua art* is the slogan of this aesthetics wing that ignores several other important aspects of our cultural practices that help, define and determinate artwork such as the historical perspectives of art history and the social practices of a community that enfranchise an object or a product as an artwork. Carroll confesses the influence of his teacher George Dickie, the propounder of the "institutional theory of art." The way Carroll thinks might be understood in terms of a difference between linguistics and philosophy of language. The aesthetic properties or the formal aspects of art identified with the property of art by critics like Walter Pater, Roger Fry and Clive Bell, and the advocates of an "aesthetic attitude" following the Kantian notion of disinterestedness such as Edward Bullogh as also the American pragmatist John Dewey who viewed aesthetic experience as the paradigm of human experience are all the targets of Carroll's attack. Dealing toward an institutional theory of art, Carroll argues for the relevance of social and historical contexts of art in identifying and appreciating art: "I have always resisted the idea that art can be defined in terms of the intended capacity of certain objects to support aesthetic experience as well as the idea that the aesthetic is best conceptualized in terms of disinterestedness." (p. 2) Nevertheless, unlike Dickie, Carroll is willing to accept a notion of aesthetic experience that explains man's response to art: "Unlike George Dickie, I do not contend that aesthetic experience is a myth, but rather something is an aesthetic experience if it involves design appreciation or the detection of aesthetic or expressive properties or the contemplation of the emergence of the formal, aesthetic, or expressive properties from their base properties, or a combination of any or all of these responses." (p. 3) But why again the term "aesthetic" is going beyond "aesthetics?" Why should "aesthetic properties" be identified with expressive properties, where the very modification "expressive" has been highly controversial in the writings of philosophers like Maurice Merleau-Punty and Michel Foucault? The Husserlian phenomenologists who interpret expression as an eidetic signification explaining the very core of consciousness, its intentionality Richard Wollheim's distinction between "natural expression" and "expression of/by correspondence" remains a great question. Despite Derrida's severe critique Husserl's exclusion of gestures and postures from "expression" with its distinct formation of indication warrants a philosopher's immediate attention. So, why should we take the aesthetic/ expressive properties, into account in dealing with philology of art?

In current philosophical discourses, the authorial intention has been for removed from the intention of the Romantic subject, where intentionality (directedness) of phenomenological vocabulary has been the key to understand the role of interpretation essential in all our verbal and non-verbal cultural properties. It is highly risky to argue that aesthetics is different from philosophy of art as linguistics is different from philosophy of language. The glaring example of a health fusion of these two disciplines already was available with the Russian Formalists of the early decades of the last century who assimilated both Husserl and Saussure in their linguistic treatment of poetry that turned to be a semiotics of art in the Prague structuralists during the 1930s and 40s.

The question is why should we associate the discipline of aesthetics with only the Kantians and formalists? If this association is a need for critical convenience, we should specify a wing of branch. If aesthetics is used as philosophy of beauty, then what harm, if we consider philosophy of art as a wing, as species of the genre aesthetics. A philosopher of art, then, can work comfortably in the area of aesthetics without any need for going beyond it.

But of course, we all must agree with Carroll that a comprehensive account of art needs the travel of an aesthetician far beyond the limitations of the formal properties of art with an attitude of disinterestedness. An audience while appreciating a work of art, always participates in it (*svamānupraveśa*, as Sanskrit critic Abhinavagupta called it), never views it disinterestedly *(taṭastha)*. The present reviewer has elaborated these points in his essay "Aesthetic Experience, and the Experience of Art and Nature" in *Art and Experience*, Praegar Publishers, 2003. The grounds on which Carroll wishes to distinguish between "aesthetics" and "philosophy of art" are no more attractive in intercultural perspectives.

Joseph Margolis, *What, After All, Is a Work of Art*? University Park: Penn State Press, 1999, pp. 143.

The work collects different lectures Margolis, delivered at different universities of Japan in the spring of 1997. The prologue to the book was delivered at the Thirteenth International Congress of Aesthetics in Lahti (Finland), in the summer of 1995. The author writes in the preface, "But the lectures do now confirm the organizing question of the entire set—namely, the sense in which artworks and human selves mutually inform the work of interpreting and understanding one another... for artworks and selves are both mutually fashioned artifacts—of however profoundly different sets."

Here is the content page:

Preface

Prologue: Beneath and Beyond the Modernism/Post-modernism Debate

1. The History of Art after the end of the History of Art
2. Relativism and Cultural Relativity
3. What, After All, Is a Work of Art?
4. Mechanical Reproduction and Cinematic Humanism

Epilogue: Interpreting Art and Life

The Epilogue unifies the arguments of all the separate pieces where Margolis puts up a common interpretive way for artworks and human life. Human beings change over time as they grow from childhood to maturity whereas artworks do not. Yet artworks are "like" persons: "What is common

to selves and artworks is not biology but Intentionality: selves and artworks are materially embodied in different ways, but what is embodied are Intentional structures, and it is those structures that are affected in similar ways under interpretation. So there is nothing strange in saying that artworks are 'like' persons—without their being persons themselves... "What persons and artworks share, in virtue of which the interpretations of them behave in similar ways, is their possessing or being histories rather than possessing natural kind natures or being natural-kind entities."

In the title essay Margolis observes that in spite of several theories (as also analyses) of artworks what remains constant is that artworks are not natural-kind entities—they are very strange "entities"—"artworks are physically embodied and culturally emergent entities"—a view that Margolis held long ago in his 1980 book *Art and Philosophy*. Restoring the same view of artworks in spite of controversies raised in the past (for example, Stephen Davies, *Definitions of Art*, 1991) Margolis states that "cultural entity" needs some more explanations. One way of explaining this cultural entity is to view phenomenologically that considers artwork as an intentional object—not the physical object in itself, but this object as it is experienced by the audience—an idea that this reviewer has sufficiently elaborated up on in his recent discussion on Abhinavagupta's definition of art (See Stephen Davies and Ananta Sukla, *Art and Essence*, Connectient: Praeger Publishers, 2003). The Western critics who familiarized this view of artworks are Hasserlians like Roman Ingarden and Wolfgang Iser. A reader being a historically based cultural entity, and the properties of artworks being cultural such as linguistic, semiotic, gestural, political, religious and environmental, both the nature of artworks and their appreciation and interpretation will be inevitably determined by the cultural contexts concerned. Margolis elaborates upon these points in this title essay (pp. 87 ff.)

In the prologue essay "The Modernism/Postmodernism Debate," Margolis perceptively remarks that one cannot really discern what is uniformly "postmodernist" in the diverse art forms such as architecture, film and literature, nor are there particular critics who can be relied upon for uniformity. He then observes that "Modernism is the old option championed now against the challenge pressed in terms of (1)-(3). Postmodernism is the abandonment of modernism in the face of (1)-(3) or (1)-(4), and, as a consequence, the abandonment of any and every effort to legitimate our truth-claims, our claims to knowledge, "Western philosophy has, since French Revolution, divided its allegiance between items (1)-(2) and (3)-(4)." "The dispute confronts us with a bogus choice: fall back to invariance and neutrality ... or give up the very idea of objective knowledge anywhere (which, we are told, cannot be rescued, if not by the failed first narrative). The business of the modernist/ postmodernist dispute blinds us to the fact that *objectivity* is constructed and endlessly reconstructed in the flux of history..."

In the essay "The History of Art after the End of the History of Art" Margolis perceptively disputes Danto in claiming that "we have now eclipsed the periodization of history itself as an expression of an essentialized history." End of the history of art means "end of the canonical history of art." Danto's notions of the end of art and history of art follows Hegel's philosophy of art and history of art. Coming to the questions of relativism and cultural relativity, Margolis exhibits his erudition and analysis in a masterly way that is rare in contemporary scholarship. "In the West" he says "the subject of relativism is relevant in the postmodern era that rejects any essence or unchangeable structure that

defines truth and reality which are no more metaphysical, but political or cultural, and this cultural relativity is due to the differences in cultural phenomena such as language, history, art, religion, social customs and the political norms that determine its ways of living for the debate. For example, while thinking of modern painting one must take notice of Clement Grenberg and Rosalind Kraus. Thinking in terms of architecture calls upon Robert Venturz and Charles Jenells; thinking in terms of film invites Fredric Jarmeson's review of capitalism; and while thinking philosophically one takes Habermas, Lyotard and Rortry into account most reasonably. So the debate is more a symptom than a full problematic of its own. If one hesitates to believe with Kraus that postmodernism simply does away with referential processes or with Greenberg that modernist painting is or ought to be committed to not violating the absolute validity of the two-dimensional 'flat' surface of easel painting, one equally disagrees with Lyotard that second-order "met a narratives" (legitimation) may be discarded without a sustained argument. Margolis thus comments, "The modernists are as bad as postmodernists." (p. 3) One sincerely ponders whether there is really any conceptual transfermation in our time that is fundamental to the historical changes, and whether the debate has successfully attacked or eclipsed all the canons they claim (or aspire?) to do so. The conventional postmodernists Lyotard and Rorty, despite their subscription to the postmodernist theme, have gone much further in their arbitrary way, "recommending dismantling philosophy altogether and constructing such advice as the logical upshot of their own discovery." (p. 5)

Margolis observes some notable changes in the Western intellectual terrain: 1. Neutrality and objectivity are no longer thought to be self-evidencing assured; 2. All cognitive privilege is abandoned; 3. We acknowledge that our cognitive powers are historically (hence contingently and variably) formed; 4. We concede, as a consequence, that the recovery of objectivity cannot consistently be secured, except in constructivist terms, under conditions collected as 1-3. Viewing phenomenologically, Margolis holds, "All that world be needed would be to abandon the standard conviction that bivalence can not be coherently breached and that reality must possess determinate unchanging structures." Along that line artworks, like persons, actions and sentences, are not *fully determinate*, but are *interpretively determinable* in intentional ways; and intentional properties are not as determinate as physical objects. They are flexive, inherently subject to interpretation and reinterpretation and the hisoticized conditions of human life. (p. 65).

Graham Frankland, *Freud's Literary Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 260.

Modernism's supersession of the Freudian psychoanalysis was due to its change from the personal to the transpersonal reflected in the Jewish/Aryan/Vienna-Zurich/Freud-Jedug conflict that was finalized in Jung's withdrawal from Freud in May 8, 1913 when Freud was writing his last section of the *Totem* and wrote that this essay "would serve to make a sharp division between us and all Aryan religiosity. For that will be the result of it... In the dispute with Zurich it comes at the right time to divide us as an acid does a salt." He also wrote, "Certainly there are great differences between the Jewish and Aryan spirit... Hence there would assuredly be here and there differences in outlook on life and art... We Jews have an easier time, having no mystial element." This lack of mystical (or religious) elements in

Freud was the reason for his misunderstanding of the significance of the Femionine, the Mother-Goddess who preceded the Father-God in the prepatriarchal level of the unconscious that Jung discovered by his thorough study of the Indo-Aryan mysticism. The phallus-centrism of Freud, as the feminists rightly detect in him, is due to his ignorance of this primordial feminine principle that is represented in the creative energy of myths otherwise known as the creative psyche.

But, viewed otherwise, the drama of his Oedipus complex, representing the killing of the Father-God in primitive rituals that represent the patriarchal society and the phallus-centism was enacted in his own life, when Jung left him (killed him). In being left (killed) Freud felt he was glorified, as it is the core-point in the patriarchal rites of patricide represented in the myth of Oedipus. It is because of this unconscious (Jewish) bias for the phallus that he was almost obsessed with Sophocles, and wrote his scientific treatises in a language that transforms them into literary texts.

The present author Frankland, in his Liverpool Ph.D. Thesis elaborates this fundamental point in both the biography of Freud and his narratives by using a German term *dichter* (meaning poet, dramatist, novelist) for Freud who had himself great fascination for Sophocles, Shakespeare, Milton and Goethe. Frankland writes "to a significant point, Freud reads dreams as if they were poetic" (p.122). When critics like Erich Newmeann observe that before Freud psychology was a mere stepchild of philosophy, implying that psychology attained the status of science introducing the term "psychoanalysis," contemporary writers like Paul Ricoear call him a philosopher and Harold Bloom a 'strong poet.'

Now, Frankland considers him "a creator, both in therapy and theory of fictional narratives" and views his work from the most radically literary perspective: as the obliquely "autobiographical product of a—frustrated or suppressed—would-be Dichter." (p.162) "I seek to reevaluate Freud's entire hermeneutic—that is, his mode of interpreting dreams, symptoms, jokes, slips serene memories, and so on—and I do this by viewing his interpretation of these 'texts' as the substitute gratification so to speak, a frustrated literary critic." (pp.3-4) "For when Freud does analyse visual symbols he tends to use verbal associations to reconstruct them to the linguistic fabric of the dream." "Freud is often pleased by the beauty of a dream interpretation." (Pp.126-127).

Frankland's enthusiasm apart, poststructuralist critics like Jacques Lacan have discovered Freud's intuitive contributions to theories of linguistics and the structures of both visual and verbal images that constitute painting and literature. But the major question is—Can we call Freud a poet? A literary autobiographer, a novelist, a dramatist? A literary critic, that too a frustrated, or suppressed/ would-be *Dichter*? There is certainly no reason for so much of enthusiasm, obsession for the paradigm of literary creativity. Freud, like many other philosophers, natural or social scientists or linguists is a creative man par excellence. But creativity does not consist only in literary creations or criticism. For that matter Jung, Saussure, Einstein, and Wittgenstein all would be literary figures. This obsession caries no sense indeed. Why again a frustrated or suppressed or would-be literary talent? Does it mean that Freud's ambition has to be a likely creator and critic, but unfortunately he could not be so? It is difficult to appreciate Frankland's views either against or in favour of Freud. He amasses information, views, references, race materials with reference to the Freudian writings, but the reviewer is disappointed to

note any precise contributive use of them. There is no point in assessing Freud as a frustrated literary talent, which he never wanted to be either consciously or unconsciously.

Nick Zangwill, *The Metaphysics of Beauty*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, pp.224.

Beauty is undoubtedly an enduring object of human experience that is being investigated and analysed unendingly in each and every generation of human civilization in both its absolute and relative perspectives. Beauty is essentially an object of *aisthesis* or sense experience. The Greek sense of beauty meant by the word *Kalos* refers to sensuous properties of an object such as colours in painting, and Aristotle says "The most beautiful colours laid on without order will not give one the same pleasure as a simple black-and-white sketch of a portrait" (1450). According to the Greeks, then, what is essential in art, is not only its sensuses properties or the object of *aisthesis* unless they are arranged in an order, and this order is the formal cause of Aristotle. Following him, the formalists argue that beauty is an *aisthesis* of *logos*, or in other words, the embodiment of *logos* represented sensuously, as poetry is the *mythos* of the *logos* or the verbal representation (speech or mythos in Homer) of *logos*. Defined so, beauty in art and beauty in nature are of the same category, with the basic difference that art is a human *techne* that completes what is incomplete in nature. Contemporary philosophers (such as George Dickie and Noël Carroll) reject this aesthetic concept of beauty, because they are relativists in considering several other factors such as social and cultural contexts as determinants of beauty rather than any representation of a universal form or principle. They reject formalism altogether.

But the present writer defends formalism in a relativist stance. "Beauty does not stand alone. It cannot exist by itself. Things are beautiful because of the way they are in other respects. Beauty is a property that depends upon other properties. Moreover, when we appreciate the beauty of a thing, we appreciate its beauty as it is realized in its other properties." For example, suppose we find a rose beautiful. What we find beautiful is a specific arrangement of coloured petals, leaves and stems. Beauty cannot float free of the way things are in other respects, and we cannot appreciate beauty except in so far as it is embodied in other respects. "Beauty cannot be solitary, and we cannot appreciate it as such." Clearly, the author's use of the phrase "specific arrangement" is the same as the Aristotelian order *(logos)*, and his principle of is equivalent to the Aristotelian *mythos* the very linguistic structure that represents human action.

The present author interprets "beauty" in a broader sense, without identifying it as the only object of aesthetics that he views in its genus, i.e., a science of sensation in general. Therefore, he does not consider beauty as the only aesthetic property, but one among many other properties, beauty as we (subjects/audience) represent it in our experience and judgement, and beauty as it is in itself—the beauty of "folk metaphysics" and the beauty of "pure metaphysics." From the very beginning, then, the author is categorizing beauty according to the Kantian division between phenomenal and nonmenal realities, although, he says, he has, left out the "deep psychological nature of our experiences and judgements of beauty" that concern Kent. Concept of beauty is one of the other aesthetic concepts that are dependent of other non-aesthetic concepts. Zanguill's approach to beauty is quite original and sheds fresh light on

the observation of many earlier philosophers like Roger Scruton, Donald Daudson, Kendal Walton, and even in a way, Aristotle. He disputes Walton's antiformalist and Scruton's anti-realist arguments. The famous Aristotelian dictum that the ugly of nature is transformed to the beautiful by the mimesis of art is countered by Zangwill —"I believe that there is a single *notion* of beauty applicable to both art and nature and that there is a single *property* of beauty that both possesses." (p.125) This unitary and univocal concept of beauty tends to propose a self-sufficient notion of beauty as a value called aesthetic and has been disputed earlier by critics like Arthur Danto and his followers. But Zang will supports the univocal aspect of beauty including its self-dependence arguing for a dependence or related view of aesthetic properties that are dependent upon non-aesthetic properties, at the same time stressing the formal sensory properties of the facts and events that are called beautiful.

Zangwill's analysis of the aesthetic language or language of aesthetics correlating it with the most relevant issues of "metaphor" and "expression" is extremely persuasive. He does not attack his rival Scruton and his follower Davidson directly, but he does so dialectically. Scruton holds that the aesthetic (otherwise called expressive) language or the language that describes the beauty of art and nature is essentially metaphorical, and in this sense aesthetic language is expressive. But Donaldson, developing this view further, says that Scruton's thesis needs an appendix that all those metaphorical expressions are essentially literal, but used metaphorically. Thus metaphor is a matter of use only whereas all meanings are literal. But what is, after all, a literal meaning, other than a matter of use? A convention—an arbitrary sign system—to use the Sausarian idiom?

Jacques Derrida has impressively argued against the priority of literality of language in his argument for metaphoricity of all language. Derrida's argument apart, Zangwill points out that words like "beautiful," "elegant" and "dainty" are used literally in aesthetic contexts whereas they are used metaphorically in non-aesthetic contexts. "For example, we might speak of a 'beautiful hand' in cards or an 'ugly mood.' There is no significant parallel in moral philosophy, so the ensuing arguments could be developed there."

Zangwill's study of the ideological view of beauty developed during the postmodernist era, by the Marxists, feminists, historicists and subultern studies that include postcolonial/colonial banners of scholarships, is precise, substantial and highly perceptive. Universality as such is rejected in to by postmodernism. The social studies undertaken by current scholarship hold beauty either as a myth or reduces it to a phenomena of political ideology—deployed as culturally and historically local, and thus in this sense is cortingent or marginal. "The concept has its source in a specific period of history or specific social arguments—perhaps bourgeois or patriarchal specifically." (pp.209-210) The aesthetic skeptics should stop, says Zingwell, their experiments and judgements not only in the spheres of aesthetics, but in all other spheres, such as morality that are equally historical and relative without any universality, and huge condemns all our value-judgments. This imperative is not an order, but certainly a caution for rethinking the rejection of all human values by considering them only *ideological.*

Mark Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 337.

The present book approaches history of ideas from analytical point of view. The author's intellectual wisdom exhibits itself in the very first page where he pronounces his sound opinion regarding the "Validity of different *approaches* to a single intellectual issue with mutual complementation rather than incompatibility." He proposes to study the logic of history of ideas from analytical point of view, triggered by the influence of Quentin Skinner, opposing the phenomenological understanding geared by the ontological hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, although he does not reject the validity of phenomenological understanding itself. He says, analytical and phenomenological understanding are valid in their own respective approaches—"surely they can complement one another as different approaches suited to explorations of different issues" irrespective of his disputing specific arguments of hermeneutic theorists. At the same time, he also differs from Skinner, who (along with Pocock) argues at defining a method for the history of ideas. Instead, holding the view that no method can constitute of form of justification, although it can perform a useful heuristic role, his concern is with the logic of history of ideas, not its heuristics, not with the question—how we can grasp the meaning of a text, but with the question—how we can explain the beliefs we postulate as the meanings of past works, the author wishes to explore the nature of the tradition by giving content to a concept of tradition, art and "to say that a particular concept of tradition does not help us to explain beliefs need not be to say that it tells us nothing about the process of human understanding of the pre-conditions of historical knowledge."

Mark Bevir defines the study of history of ideas most precisely—"To study the history of ideas is to study meaning, and so culture, from a historical perspective... The study of culture must always be parasitic on history." (p.1) Meaningfulness of human life combines with a historical consciousness, although scholars have assessed cultural phenomena epistemically, morally or aesthetically. Historicism of Bevir has marginalized the areas of knowledge counted under mainstream and considered self-sufficient and self-complete by the cultural traditions of different countries and continents. In searching for an adequate theory of culture Bevir proposes to explore the forms of reasoning appropriate to the history of ideas by asking questions: What is a meaning? What constitutes objective knowledge of the past? What are beliefs and traditions? How can we explain why people held the beliefs they did? In the first seven chapters, he deals with subjects of different categories such as analytic philosophy, meaning, objectivity, belief, synchronic and diachromic explanations and distortions. He clarifies that his approach is anti-foundational as exemplified by later Wittgenstein and phenomenology of Heidegger, particularly the post-analytic anti-foundationalism undermining precisely the logical positivist's concept of analytic of that designs the philosophy of history.

Bevir distinguishes three categories of meaning: wermermeutic, semantic and linguistic, the latter two concerning the truth conditions and conventional usage respectively whereas the first one that concerns the intentions of the author's phenomenological consciousness, not the individual intention that is rejected by the New Critics. Bevir argues that it is this meaning that constitutes the subject of the history of ideas: "whereas strong intentionalists regard intentions as conscious and prior to utterances, a weak intentionalism allows for the unconscious and for changes of intent doing the act of marking an

utterance... Weak intentions are individual view points." (p.27) In the third chapter, dealing with objectivity, the author asserts that objectivity cannot rest on a particular method, or on a logic of vindication or refutation. Instead, a general concept of objectivity based on appeals to shared perceptions of certain facts, a critical attitude, and the possibility of comparing rival webs of theories should be developed. Talking of belief, the author asserts that the historians of ideas study works in order to recover hermeneuatic meanings understood as expressions of beliefs. The conceptual priority of sincere, conscious, and rational beliefs implies that historians initially should presume the beliefs expressed in works are sincere, conscious and rational. Consequently, the fifth chapter deals with the question how can historians account for the meanings they reconstruct from the relics available to them? And in the answer, he rejects all forms of scientism that claim reductionism, i.e., matters of belief can be reduced to physiology and social positivism. "Because our synchronic and diachromic forms of explanation presume rationality," the author observes in the sixth chapter, "they work by uncovering the conditional links between serious beliefs." Conditional links are neither necessary nor arbitrary as are those defined in terms of "pure chance." In the seventh chapter, dealing with distortion, the author considers the forms of explanation appropriate to cases in which the presumption of sincere, conscious and rational belief fails. Thus the concluding remarks are: "Historious should adopt, first, the form of justificatory reasoning detailed in the discussion of objectivity; second, the forms of explanatory reasoning for sincere, conscious, rational beliefs detailed in the discussion of webs of beliefs, traditions and dilemmas; and, third, the form of explanatory reasoning for deception, self-deception and irrationality detailed in the discussion of the operation of rogue pro-attitude."

This long project of Mark Bevir detours several intellectual fields that are confined neither to history nor to the political issues that constitute and interpret historical events or history of ideas. The vast body of material he gathers and the way he categorizes them in correlating for a consistent and systematic point of view exemplifies his perceptive intelligence as well as the scholarly skill for formulating a self-conscious theory that can be used and applied variously. "My principal aim has been to describe how historious of ideas should explain the historical objects they postulate and justify the narratives they tell." To form and analyse a notion of history, of idea, and of history of ideas under a single cover is a very hard task indeed.

Ian Bauccom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp.249

English studies, and, for that matter, any study of/in literary tradition/history has been far removed from the areas, methods and tools it adopted during the first eight or nine decades of the last century. The issues of personality, individual emotions of the poet, the structure(s) of language the literature in question uses, as also the methods of examinations of the relationship between the poet and the reader, addresser and the addressee, systems of coding and decoding the media of communication are all being substituted/ overshadowed/supplemented by political issues that are responsible for the formulation, growth and identification of a culture that produces its literature. The issues of power and discourse expounded and emphasized in the postmodernist era have toppled the structuralist and modernist linguistic

issues very quickly. Thus soon after the Derridean explosion of the notion of deconstruction critics engaged themselves in correlating Marxist economic and political theories as reviewed by the neo-Marxists, Foncauldian theory of power, Lacanian philosophy/psychology of language and the notions of human will as expounded by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Immanent results were differences in writing due to political and/or social domination(s) by way of (dis) location of (cultural) identity. Sensibility is no more a given phenomenon. It appears man-made by—a product of political (including administrative) and gender domination. This sensibility the very core of a culture is not anything given to a people from some primordial time, it is a product of history in course of a history of domination of various types.

The remarkable response to such correlations appears in Salman Rushdies' radical statement that the English explored their identity not in the England of pre-imperial/colonial era, but in the very places they colonized. Their identity is a "cultivated confusion." There might be some elements of exaggeration in such a statement as that of Rushdie, but a lot of truth underlies the statement as well. Three exponents of what is called colonialism or post-colonialism—Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak—have stretched the intellectual movements to a point where thoughts appear notoriously attractive in spite of their manifold exaggerations.

Ian Baucon, the author of the present book who teaches English literature at Dake University has drawn upon the ideas of Bhabha and Rushdie. Following Frantz Fanon, Bhabha discovers the geography of imperialism as a "zone of occult instability," whereas, he notes, describing the territories of British imperialism as spaces of bewilderment and loss that continue to trouble and confound English subjects. Rushdie indicates that "such imperial estrangements of English identity survive the formal end of imperialism, that a postimperial England is itself resident to lingering zones of imperial confession." Baucon thus plots in the present work "construction of theses spaces of instability in the geographiy of Englishness," examines "not one but six spaces—Gothic architecture, The Victoria Terminus in Bombay, the Anglo-Indian Mutiny Pilgrimage, the cricket field, the country house, and the zone of urban riot—each of which has housed the disciplinary projects of imperialism and the imperial destabilizations and re-formations of English identity" (p. 4-5). Baucon refers to Lynda Colley's statement that the British were aware of their identity as British not in their own place, because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but in reaction to the "other," out of their shores after 1707, putting it precisely, the British identity is only a colonizer's imperial identity. Baucon amasses historical, political, economic, architectural and other materials that illustrate the anxieties of the imperial administrators to inprint their Britishness on the pages of the colonial history. One such instance is the Victoria Terminus railway station of Bombay, the most elaborated Gothic structure in India modeled after St. Pancras station in London.

When the central thesis is clear, a reader of the book can utilize the materials for a reductionism that the British identity is not an inherent phenomenon as its hybridity emerges in the colonies that the people founded outside their own native place. The book is most gripping and reads like a fiction, which it is indeed, rather than a historical narrative, because of the very attitude of the forerunners of the colonial/postcolonial scholarship. The fact that political ideology structures the character of a culture is simply a naked truth. Subjugation is a binary process of power that effects both the subject and the

subjugator, and there is nothing new to *invent* such a phenomenon. But to argue for and against such a natural phenomenon as domination is absolutely a risky one. Nobody would appreciate being subjugated. But nobody can avoid the circumstantial forces that bring such an unwanted occasion to effect. This does not certainly imply or instantiate that a culture is structured only or to the maximum point by political events or ideology. To say that the British discovered their identity in their colonial imperialism is as humorous as to say that the colonized subject discovers his cultural identity by being subjugated. Sara Suleri has even argued that one should sympathize with the colonizers because of the great pains they took in colonizing. Political invasion by military force or by exploitation of information technology has both its sides—pro and contra. One wonders, why such an attack on the British alone? Edward said has forgotten to note the damage the Islam has imprinted on India. So also how the Marathas looted the Eastern India during the post-Mogul and pre-British period. But could we say that the Mogul's earned their identity only during their rule in India or Islam earned its identity by its forceful conversion, whereas Hindus refrained from such conversion since the direction of the *Gita* in the first century B.C., and, therefore, they have no identity? Cultural identity, like personal identity is always a relative phenomenon. Political or religious factors are only aspects of such relativism. Pure culture is a myth as is a pure religion or pure language or pure nation based on purities of language, religion, art and literature.

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